A Taste of Sustainability
Cover design by David O'Brien, Laura Nitschke and Charlotte Nitschke
A TASTE OF SUSTAINABILITY:
CASE STUDIES OF SUSTAINABLE CAFÉS IN AUSTRALIA

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We are particularly grateful for the research assistance provided by Emily Moskwa, Chris Krollikowski and Sue Gilbey. They demonstrated a commitment to sustainable hospitality and offered us valuable contributions to this report. We also thank Tina Morganella for her editorial assistance with the report.

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Finally, we note we did the best we could to honour the knowledge and engagement our interviewees gave us in this research; any errors or omissions are inadvertent and we do hope that all who helped us are pleased with these results.
Australians love food. We love eating it, we love talking about it, we love watching cooking shows and we most definitely love it when other people cook for us. So it’s not surprising that we’re currently witnessing an emerging café and restaurant culture that values where our food comes from and how it is produced.

With the advent of cooking shows such as MasterChef, which consistently draw incredible ratings, we have seen a shift in people’s attitudes towards food. It is not only a source of sustenance, it has the ability to channel creativity and bring people and communities together. What isn’t always considered by most of us, however, is the direct impact that our food choices have on the health of our planet.

In Australia, agriculture is our backbone; it forms a huge part of our cultural and economic identity. Even for a city dweller there is often a warm nostalgia that is evoked when taking in our sunburnt countryside, dotted with sheep, cows and crops of all shapes and sizes.

But there is also a more troubling side to our food and farming culture. We are currently facing an obesity epidemic and our health care system is burdened by diet-related illness. Our environment is suffering in the form of soil degradation and erosion, pollution of our waterways and atmosphere, chemical run-off and loss of biodiversity. Our animals are suffering, with 500 million animals housed in factory farms each year in Australia alone, and our oceans and waterways are vulnerable to over-fishing.

Farmers are finding it harder and harder to make a living and recent media scrutiny has drawn attention to ongoing human rights abuses within our food system.

What does our hospitality industry have to do with all of this? Everything.

Cafés and restaurants play an important role in shaping our food culture. They are on the front line, serving food to the masses each and every day and by nature of this, have millions of touch points to influence how and where someone chooses to buy food.

As consumers, the way we choose to spend our shopping dollar has the power to send a very clear message about what type of food system we would like to be a part of. We have
the ability to re-imagine a food system that values farmers, animals, seasonality and our environment.

Chefs are our new rock stars; food venues, our new community hubs. This report details the incredible work being done by those who are at the forefront of recognising the role that the hospitality industry has to play in reducing its environmental footprint and acting as sustainability leaders.

These cafés, restaurants and organisations lead by example; they value their people, they let the produce speak for itself and operate in a way that fosters social inclusion and treads more lightly on our planet.

This report is an important read for anyone who eats out; actually, for anyone who eats. For those wishing to learn more about how to define sustainability in the context of a food business and about how ethically-minded organisations are working to shape a food culture that takes into account more than just price, then this report is for you.

The road to sustainability is not always easy. It’s not always immediately financially rewarding either. Yet what rings true from reading the case studies within this report is that it is always, always inspiring and it is always driven by a few committed people who are making a remarkable contribution to their field, to the environment and to the communities they serve.

Bon Appétit

Cassie Duncan

Co-founder and General Manager of Sustainable Table
Executive summary

Sustainability and its attainment is one of the most important challenges of our time. Ever since the Brundtland Report popularised the concept of sustainable development, communities around the globe have been confronting how to balance the needs of humanity for consumption of resources with the finite limits of the environment and considerations of social equity and well-being. The hospitality industry has engaged with these issues through efforts at corporate social responsibility, greening agendas and sustainability initiatives. Simultaneously, restaurants and café around the world have offered creative initiatives and models of best practice which have spread, multiplied and evolved starting arguably from when Alice Waters opened Chez Panisse in 1971 in Berkeley, California and drew attention to “the political consequences of personal eating habits” (Johnston & Baumann, 2015:8-9).

To open this report we offer a brief overview of sustainability before explaining how it applies to the restaurant sector. The Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA) defines sustainability as “restaurants managing the social and environmental impacts of their operations” (Sustainable Restaurant Association, n.d.). We use the triple bottom line approach to explore how sustainability can be enacted in terms of environmental, economic and social sustainability. We also offer a brief consideration of key ethical issues, including fair trade and animal welfare. These opening remarks are intended to offer a context for understanding the 20 case studies that we offer as a result of our year-long research project.

These 20 case studies were gathered from research undertaken in Adelaide and Goolwa in South Australia, and Melbourne, Victoria, supported by funding from the Le Cordon Bleu–University of South Australia 2014 grants scheme. This research project represents an expansion of a 2011 pilot study conducted with one restaurateur exploring the way he used his sustainable café to foster an engagement with sustainability amongst all the café’s stakeholders.

Using a semi-structured interview technique, we interviewed 20 restaurateurs and chefs who were recognised by the food media or by experts as pioneers in aspects of sustainability. We interviewed under the understanding that contributions would not be anonymous and we requested permission to attribute quotes to interviewees (with the option for them to preview all such quotes in advance of publication). Restaurants were selected through purposive sampling based on expert recognition of the enterprise as a site of sustainable practice and/or membership in associations like Green Table, the Sustainable Table and Cittaslow Goolwa. Interview data was supplemented with primary and secondary data and participant observation. We employed a qualitative approach in the interviews to elicit narratives enabling rich insights into what their experiences can tell us about the
influence of sustainable eateries on public awareness, participation in sustainability, and how this might contribute to urban place-making and destination branding as a result of the restaurants’ profile and activities.

The case studies feature a large number of commercial enterprises that have been operating for varying lengths of time. There are also a smaller number of social enterprises represented. Amongst the 20 case studies, some have a specific focus, such as fostering models of zero waste, embodying the locavore movement or animal welfare ethics, while others are striving to achieve a balance across all three measures of the triple bottom line standard. They all have interesting stories to share and we offer our case studies here as one source of sharing.

These cases are organised by geographical location:

- Goolwa: The Australasian Circa 1858, Bombora, Motherduck and Rankines at The Whistle Stop.
- Melbourne: Lentil As Anything, STREAT, Charcoal Lane, Brothl, Mesa Verde and The Grain Store.

Finally, we offer some assessment of the significance of these practices and highlight some recommendations that arise from their experiences and example.

One final important result is the realisation that further research is vital to fully understand the contributions that restaurants and cafés are making to efforts to promote and achieve sustainability. We hope this report will inspire other researchers to continue this work and add to our understanding of the significance of hospitality leaders in fostering engagement with transitions to sustainability. More importantly, with pressures of climate change and human impacts on the environment, we note that more restaurants need to be encouraged and enabled to participate in sustainability initiatives and we offer these exemplary examples as inspiration.

References
Introduction

Sustainability in restaurants and cafés

*The way humanity manages or mismanages its food supply will in many ways define the 21st century—currently we know that we are not doing a great job...* (Nick Nuttall, Global Director of Communications, United Nations Environment Programme cited OzHarvest, 2014)

Chef Simon Beaton predicted the next big food service trend would feature “sustainable and responsible local practices focusing on green restaurants” (Beaton, 2009:8). Realising that very little was known about sustainable restaurants we undertook this research on sustainable cafés in Australia between 2014 and 2015. One of the questions we were asked was: what exactly does the term sustainable restaurant actually mean? As this report will demonstrate, there are no easy answers to this provocative question but there certainly are some interesting and diverse approaches enacted by innovative and committed restaurateurs. In this section of the report we will offer an introduction addressing the definition of sustainability in general, how it is enacted in the hospitality sector featuring restaurants and cafés, and some of the issues that arise with implementing sustainability. This will be followed by a brief overview of some of the associations fostering engagement with aspects of sustainability in the restaurant sector, including Green Table, Sustainable Table, Cittaslow and the SRA. Finally, we will offer our 20 case studies which will be presented by geographical location: Adelaide, Goolwa and Melbourne.

Sustainability and sustainable development

Since the release of the document *Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), or the Brundtland Report as it became known, sustainability has become a buzzword affecting every field of human endeavour, including the restaurant and café sector. The Brundtland Report defined sustainable development as “satisfying the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The report introduced five basic principles of sustainability:

- the idea of holistic planning and strategy-making that links economic, environmental and social concerns
- the importance of preserving essential ecological processes
- the need to protect both biodiversity and human heritage
- the need for development to occur in such a way that productivity can be sustained over the long term for future generations
- the goal of achieving a better balance of fairness and opportunity between nations (Hall, 2008:20).
These principles laid the foundations for considered commitment and radical action to transform all human endeavours in an effort to ensure human pressures on the ecosystem do not undermine future living standards. This led to an articulation of *sustainable development* which discouraged the placement of the economic benefits of development as the exclusive determinant in decision-making, instead relegating it to only one element of the broader picture. While largely focused on environmental concerns, there was also a strong equity aspect as both intergenerational and intragenerational equity were emphasised, ensuring that social equity was not forgotten. As a result, sustainability is most often diagrammed as three intersecting circles representing the sectors of the economy, the environment, and society; this can be described as the triple bottom line approach (see figure 1).

![Figure 1: A model of interdependent systems: Ecology, society and economy. Adapted from Stilwell (2002:14)](attachment:image.png)

However, while providing us with a simple visual insight into this complex phenomenon, of course success is not so simple to attain:

*Disciples of this framework assert that sustainability is a matter of balancing the needs of the environment with those of the economy and of society. Followers often use the phrases “sustainable economy”, “sustainable communities”, or “sustainable environments”. Such uses are imprecise, as they export to the sectors a condition that can be satisfied only within the*
bull’s-eye intersection of all three circles. The bull’s-eye, by definition, is not achieved by a tug-of-war, trade-offs or compromise; rather, it is the condition of satisfying the requirements of all three sectors simultaneously. (Bazan & Slawecki, 2002)

What this brief analysis indicates is that the implementation of sustainability in society is contested. Managing the complexity of ecology, economy and society is very difficult and the choices that must be made have long reaching consequences which causes disagreements among stakeholders on strategy and best practice.

Sustainability in hospitality and tourism

In terms of hospitality studies specifically, the boundaries between considerations of sustainability and ethics, corporate social responsibility and “greening” agendas are loose (for example, Clarke & Chen, 2007). It is evident that since the articulation of sustainability, the hospitality and tourism industries have engaged with pressures to implement change due to a number of reasons, including:

- genuine concern and engagement
- consumer interest and pressure
- regulatory regimes
- and cost and marketing advantages that arise from sustainability efforts.

Very interesting innovations and models have resulted and some of these are demonstrated in our case studies. These include movements like the slow food movement; the use of cafés as tools for social change, for instance, in providing hospitality training for disadvantaged groups; and the use of cafés as places for community building and solidarity.

In terms of food cultures evident in society, it is clear that fundamental changes are underway and people are rethinking their engagement with food and its enjoyment. For example, the slow food movement has emerged from Italy to overtake the world with a three-fold agenda: promoting taste education, defending biodiversity, and supporting small-scale, sustainable, local economies worldwide (Slow Food, n.d.). People are involved in food cultures now in new ways. This is exemplified in the popularity of celebrity chefs such as Jamie Oliver, television cooking shows like Master Chef in Australia, and a proliferation of gastronomic holidays and food and wine festivals held around the globe. There is also a context of emerging food crises which are catalysts to a transformation in food cultures. For instance, a predicted collapse of global fisheries is forcing restaurateurs to seek seafood from sustainable fisheries and has sparked initiatives like the Ocean Wise Program in Australia (Ryan, 2009:26). Industry associations have been formed in response to some of these pressures, including the SRA in the UK, the Green Table Association and Sustainable Table in Australia, and Cittaslow (see profiles later in the report).

These industry associations generally foster a sustainable restaurant and catering sector and see things in a more holistic way. A great model is the SRA based in the UK but representing
members globally. It defines sustainability in this sector as “restaurants managing the social and environmental impacts of their operations” (Sustainable Restaurant Association, n.d.-b). The SRA works on three focus areas of sourcing, society, and environment, and divides these up into 14 areas for consideration. Under sourcing, they encourage restaurants to support environmentally positive farming, to use local and seasonal food, source sustainable fish, use ethical meat and dairy, and engage with Fair Trade products. The facet on society suggests good community engagement, treating people fairly (staff, suppliers and customers), promoting healthy eating and engaging in responsible marketing. Lastly, the program on the environment highlights five key areas: water-saving, workplace resources, supply chain practices, waste management and energy efficiency (Sustainable Restaurant Association, n.d.-a).

Café display, Adelaide. (Photo F. Higgins-Desbiolles)

Environmental initiatives for sustainability

Arguably, the restaurant sector’s engagement with sustainability is vital if we are to reduce human impact on the environment. According to Sustainable Food Service:

*Restaurants are the most energy intensive commercial buildings in the United States according to the Energy Information Administration. Restaurants, per square foot, consume nearly three times the energy of the average commercial building. Long hours of operation, specialized equipment and sheer demand make up much of the substantial consumption, but overall the energy consumption by foodservice buildings is excessive and often wasteful! (n.d.)*

Cafés have perhaps most easily engaged with the environmental aspects of sustainability partly because in the public arena sustainability has frequently been discussed as an environmental concern (rather than a social concern). There are also economic benefits to be gained by environmental sustainability initiatives such as, for instance, reduced costs associated with lower energy and water usage. Finally, there is the environmental awareness held by the public and so publicising a café’s environmental policies and practices can pay off in terms of good public relations and a competitive market edge.
As places of privileged consumption, it is not a given that cafés and restaurants act as responsible entities in terms of environmental sustainability. However, with some thought and effort, cafés can become sites of exciting initiatives for environmentally responsible practices. The following section will canvas some of the possibilities.

**Energy reduction**

There are a number of ways cafés and restaurants can reduce their demand for energy. This can begin through a proactive approach to the design of the building and its fit-out, if building the premises from scratch. Such new buildings will be subject to new energy efficient standards and this will result in great reductions in energy use. When building from new, preference can be given to use of recycled material and materials with low embodied energy (the energy that is used to create them and deliver them).

Passive solar heating is the least expensive way to heat and cool any space, particularly in Australia’s relatively moderate climate. Design for passive solar heating and cooling aims to keep out summer sun and let in winter sun while ensuring the building’s overall thermal performance retains that heat in winter but excludes it and allows it to escape in summer. It requires a degree of understanding and some active participation each day according to the temperature and the conditions, through efforts such as engaging window blinds. Recently, employment of vertical garden designs has also assisted in energy minimisation while adding to the visual aesthetics of restaurants. Two of our profiled cases – Café Troppo and Sarah’s Sister’s Sustainable Café – have been standouts in terms of these design techniques.

Apart from the passive solar principles and the purchase/use of recycled re-used tables and chairs (materials with low embodied energy) there may not be a lot that restaurateurs can do with the built environment in terms of energy reduction, given that most cafés and restaurants are leased and sometimes in very old or even heritage buildings. In such cases the option of installing solar panels or other renewable sources of energy may not be feasible. The installation of LED lighting and choosing energy efficient appliances, sourcing suppliers who rely on a high percentage of renewables and using a cellular approach to the restaurant space, so that only some sections of the restaurant are open and used, heated or
cooled, are still viable options for reducing energy costs. Behaviour in the form of active participation is required, especially in regards to turning off appliances not in use.

**Zero Waste**

According to Zero Waste SA:

*Every year an estimated 100,000 tonnes of commercial food waste is generated in South Australia by the hospitality sector and other businesses – and only 6000 tonnes is recycled or composted. Food that ends up in landfill creates methane – a greenhouse gas 21 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.* (2012)

In order to address these problems, Zero Waste SA and the Restaurant and Catering Association of South Australia announced in 2012 a partnership to work towards reducing these impacts. This is one example of the way in which the hospitality sector is addressing the issue of waste and even embracing a concept to work towards zero waste.

The concept of zero waste is based on the principles found in nature of closed loop systems where everything is put to use and nothing goes to waste. Achieving this in the restaurant sector requires the restaurateur to incorporate the four “R”s philosophy of rethink, reduce, re-use and recycle.

Rethinking is very important, and can be applied in every aspect of the restaurant operations in terms of food management, supply chain and business operations. The food supply chain starts at production and may include a range of links including transportation, processing, distribution, purchase, consumption and waste. In every link in this food chain there is opportunity to do things differently. The process of rethinking then enables the restaurateur to reduce the use of resources.

Reduction in resources can be multi-fold. This may include: planning menus to reduce the food waste that ends up in landfill; reducing the distance that the food has to be transported (known as food miles), by purchasing locally; reducing the amount of packaging (helping to reduce costs); reducing the use of chemicals and using only environmentally-friendly cleaning products; and not succumbing to the dictates of fashion for new fit-outs and new café equipment.
The next “R” is recycling. Just about everything that goes into a café or restaurant can be recycled, including egg cartons, plastic bags, plastic containers, batteries, bottles, glass, cans, metal, cardboard, corks, paper, and polystyrene containers. This requires a little effort for a lot of return; not only is it better for the environment, it saves costs of rubbish removal services and landfill levies. Most councils make provision for the removal of recyclable material as they have a requirement to reduce what goes to landfill but staff need to be trained and encouraged to undertake the work to organise categories of recyclable materials. Also, food waste can be collected for composting to enrich soils; Sarah’s Sister’s Sustainable Café, included in our Adelaide case studies, has a composting club. In small spaces where there is little soil or room for a large compost bin, a bokashi bucket (a small enclosed digestive system which breaks food down quickly) can be used to derive rich liquid for use on any plants. As our case studies show, Mesa Verde’s rooftop worm farm and Brothl’s closed loop composting system demonstrate just how far current leadership in the café sector is progressing in this domain.

Finally, there is re-use, a technique requiring the least energy. This is an important tactic, particularly in our consumerist, disposable society where we are encouraged to throw things away after one use and buy another one. This is often unnecessary; so much can be re-used, exchanged or just given away. The “keep cup” which café patrons can re-use for their daily coffees rather than using the take-away cups that fill our landfill sites is now a rather ubiquitous icon of the new commitment to reducing waste and was well observed in our café research. However, our sustainable cafés were doing a great deal more as well.

In our case studies a number of restaurants such as Lentil As Anything, have made use of pre-loved tables, chairs and other materials. This principle also applies to food and proprietors can make arrangements with local charity groups to provide food that has been prepared but not sold to agencies assisting people in need. A great example is the OzHarvest program which has developed a large-scale food rescue program in Australia (see http://www.ozharvest.org). The documentary “Waste Deep” developed by the Sustainable Table is a recommended resource on food industries and zero waste efforts (see https://vimeo.com/87989774).

OzHarvest “Think. Eat. Save.” event Adelaide showcasing reclaimed food served to the public. (Photo F. Higgins-Desbiolles)
Efficient water usage

Another key arena where cafés can make a difference environmentally is in terms of water usage, especially in a drought-prone country such as Australia. Ideally, cafés should be self-sufficient in water by collecting and filtering their own rainwater; however, this is not always possible in leased premises, which is the situation for many commercial cafés and restaurants. Below are some initiatives whereby efficiencies in water usage can be made:

- changing taps to single levers as the desired temperature balance is easier to maintain thus minimising wasting water
- ensuring taps do not leak
- reducing splashing by fitting low flow valves
- installing dual flush toilets
- never washing or rinsing anything under a running tap, instead using a half-filled sink
- if a dishwasher is used filling it to capacity
- considering use and wastage of water in food purchases for the café.

Carbon Footprint Assessment

As a matter of interest and to further motivate behaviour change restaurateurs might undertake an estimation of their carbon footprint. In this era when we are greatly concerned about human-induced climate change, a holistic assessment of a business’s contributions to greenhouse gas emissions provides important information which can then be used to plan necessary change, see: https://www.carbonstory.org/info/show/footprint_calculation

Economic Sustainability

*Compared to companies that focus on short-term profits and that make decisions based solely on the bottom line, sustainable companies think long-term. They forge strong relationships with employees and members of the community. They find ways to reduce the amount of natural resources they consume and the amount of waste and pollution they produce. As a result, sustainable companies endure, surviving major shocks like global recessions, worker strikes, executive scandals and boycotts by environmental activists.*

*(Network for Business Sustainability, 2013:6)*

A holistic approach to sustainability – often referred to as the triple bottom line method – sees beyond the traditional financial bottom line of a business to the profits and proceeds that a business makes socially, environmentally, and economically. In addition to construing sustainability to include all three of these aspects, this approach positions economic sustainability not only in terms of traditional corporate capital and individual return, but it considers total economic profit with regard to how much of an impact a business has on its surrounding economic environment. Economic sustainability can be thought of as
progressive economic value, and a sustainable business is one that will continue to prosper into the future as well as one that strengthens the local economy that it is part of.

While conventional cafés and restaurants tend to focus on economic sustainability as a key driver and central indicator of their success, the sustainable eateries showcased in this report consider it only one focus among a series of interlinked social, environmental and economic indicators and impacts. They tend to view their businesses as social and environmental entities rather than purely financial entities, an approach sometimes also referred to as the ‘People, Planet, Profit’ approach. Profit is no doubt important, but it is not the first and foremost factor in every business decision that is made.

For small and medium-sized enterprises such as cafés and restaurants, this is not without difficulties, however, as seen in the following examples:

- **High upfront costs**

  Environmental improvements often have high upfront costs. The cost of investing in renewable energy technology or water-saving devices is often expensive for a small or medium-sized business who may want it and support it most. While in the longer-term cost savings are typically made through reduced or renewable resource use, these savings could take several years to be achieved.

- **Few resources available**

  Quite simply put, it takes a lot of hard work to get results in any small and medium-sized business, and sustainable eateries are no different. Developing in-house expertise in sustainability can be time consuming and while a lot of passion and dedication is often the driving force behind the scenes, the assistance from external organisations cannot be overlooked for professional guidance. While there are some very good resources available in the UK, Canada and Australia, the sector may need greater awareness of these (see Associations section of this report).

- **Limited ability to employ staff**

  Sustainable eateries are often small and have a limited ability to employ staff, especially when they are becoming established and lacking in cash flow. The high level of casual employees and government-regulated penalty rates for workers can also have a high impact on this (see below).
• Penalty rates for workers
Hospitality staff often get a higher pay rate when working weekends, public holidays, overtime, late night shifts or early morning shifts. In recent years, many Australian cafés and restaurants have reduced their services over holiday periods as they have considered it unaffordable to operate over public holidays, even when they knew closing would also hurt their business.

• Embedding sustainability actions into the workplace culture
To optimise their activities, it is important for sustainable eateries to establish a culture of sustainability that reinforces sustainable habits and values in the workplace. This promotion of sustainability should involve all employees not just the restaurateur or chef. Employee turnover is amongst the highest in the hospitality industry and if there is high turnover of staff this can be an issue as time dedicated to the education of sustainability may negatively impact financial gains in the short term when it could be most critical to stay afloat. Cafés and restaurants may also face disparities in employee awareness levels or willingness to act, causing further difficulties impinging on their sustainability.

• Trade-offs
Sustainable eateries are often confronted with trade-offs regarding which environmental technologies to invest in or which line of products to sell. For example, organic produce may align with a business’s agricultural philosophy, but can be expensive and the produce may not be available regularly or be grown locally. As such, a business may not be able to depend on their availability for inclusion on a menu. In many cases, a business is forced to choose between either local or organic – whilst they may support both causes, it is impractical or impossible to guarantee a combination of both types of product. Choosing organic as an ethical position then has implications for affordability and is likely to exclude some demographics.

• Supply chain
Partnering with sustainable suppliers may increase business costs because if consumer demand is not yet strong enough, each level of the supply chain is likely to charge a premium for sustainable products and services as they supply niche markets and/or operate on smaller scales with potentially less cost savings available.

• Innovation to maintain both competitiveness and sustainability
Through their innovation, sustainable eateries often serve as a lever for environmental protection and create social value. At the same time, however, it is important for them to be responsive to customer demand by offering quality and value-added products and services to ensure they remain competitive in a changing market while still contributing to
sustainability. It can be a challenge to remain focused on sustainability within such a dynamic context.

- Using investment to promote sustainable initiatives

The desire to balance different sustainability objectives can bring difficult decisions regarding where to invest funds. For example, deciding whether to invest in environmental certification, independent environmental campaigns, or local community campaigns, when each may bring different financial returns (or even losses). Investing significant amounts of one’s time on the planning and contribution to local events or sustainability initiatives is another investment that can be seen to compete with time available to spend on one’s own business planning and development.

- Response to greenwashing

Greenwashing adversely affects sustainable eateries’ competitiveness by luring away consumers who are not critically aware or rigorous in their assessment of genuine efforts towards sustainability. They could also make consumers mistrustful and reluctant towards cafés and restaurants that are truly sustainable (for example, by offering inferior quality products, or associating with unrecognisable certification programs). Indeed positioning sustainability as a competitive advantage without being accused of greenwashing themselves is yet another challenge.

**Social sustainability**

The social aspects of sustainability enacted by restaurants and cafés could be seen as a continuum ranging from the more typical charitable support they may give to their local community, such as sponsoring sports clubs, to the more active role they may take in being agents of community building and development. Over the last 20 years it is evident to anyone who frequents cafés or restaurants that many now thrive on a loyal customer base who return time and again to their favourite venues. While clearly there are distinctions between fast food venues and the other end of the scale of prestige and fine dining, it is in this middle sector where we can see a different form of social engagement, where people may linger, feel a sense of attachment and identification, and where a space is co-created which reforms social relations. This is an exciting space of changing food cultures and new social dynamics. Sustainability-focused establishments who wish to honour the social pillar
of the triple bottom line think through their community engagement strategies and even work to foster community development and well-being.

With changes in recent decades people have become more urbanised, individualised and isolated from sources of former social networks. Additionally, many people are working longer hours, families are fractured, more people live in closed, gated living spaces and the advent of social media enables communication but in isolation. It is obvious that people crave a place where they can make connections, have real conversations and feel welcome outside of their home; cafés with food and drinks make the ideal space for connection and comfort. The importance of the social space opened up by cafés and restaurants actually serves a community need for association, acceptance and identity in our fast paced world.

In our outline of social sustainability we will rely on the guidance of the SRA who regard social sustainability as encompassing:

- community engagement
- treating people fairly
- healthy eating
- and responsible marketing. (Sustainable Restaurant Association, n.d.-a)

**Community engagement**, at a minimum, could be described as community giving and support, employing locally and networking with other local businesses for mutual support. However, some of our restaurants profiled in this report take this much further. This is particularly the case for the small number of social enterprises included here, including Charcoal Lane, STREAT, Lentil as Anything, Experience Café and Nove on Luce, who take the role of the café to its uppermost limits in terms of serving community welfare goals. In these cases, we see the capacities of the café being harnessed for social development and welfare through techniques such as offering hospitality training for disadvantaged segments of their communities, offering spaces for interaction between groups that otherwise might not interact and supporting community networks that enhance people’s well-being and engagement. Others such as the Red Lime Shack and Sarah’s Sister’s Sustainable Café have been agents of urban place-making and community development.

For the SRA “**Treating people fairly** means doing the decent thing by staff, suppliers and customers. It’s nice to be nice!” (Sustainable Restaurant Association, n.d.-a).

In terms of staff, creating a work environment that empowers and advances the well-being of workers is a genuine social responsibility of hospitality businesses, but it also makes sound business sense in businesses dependent on the engagement of staff with customers. Strategies in this social indicator can be gleaned from the SRA’s sustainability assessments and cases provided on their website (Sustainable Restaurant Association, n.d.-b). Best practices include:
• Having formal contracts in place for both part-time and full-time employees if possible. This can be very difficult for SMEs and in these cases some security or at least clarity of length of employment, terms of employment and guaranteed hours provide a degree of job security.

• Having a code of conduct and providing and implementing written formal grievance and disciplinary policies.

• Providing all members of staff with a free meal per shift and other benefits if possible. This assists them financially and also informs staff about the food which they are serving, which is useful when recommending dishes.

• Making sure employees are aware of how service charges and tips are managed in the business.

• Developing and implementing a training scheme and induction that includes the restaurant’s sustainability commitments, energy and water savings strategies, health and safety and management training. This is essential for employees’ development and leads to well-informed and sufficiently aware staff.

• Offering staff benefits of further training, skills enhancement and career progression whenever possible.

• Providing apprenticeships for school leavers. This offers those seeking employment an opportunity to learn vital skills and enter the job market.

• Employing people with disabilities, from disadvantaged backgrounds and experiencing hardships is also an important contribution the restaurant sector can make.

However, some of our case studies demonstrated further practices on employee empowerment and inclusive decision-making, with the most radical being the Co-op Coffee Shop of Adelaide which was developed as a worker’s cooperative to create a café workspace owned and managed by the workers themselves.

Treating suppliers fairly is important for sustainable restaurants and represents a sharp contrast to the trend of bargaining down prices paid to farmers, producers and suppliers that is a characteristic of cut throat competition. The key to social sustainability in terms of suppliers is reliable and reciprocal relationships with suppliers that deliver a fair price, agreed terms and mutually beneficial building of businesses together. In the research undertaken for this report, a key point of difference the restaurateurs interviewed for this project reported was how important relationships with suppliers was to them, how much effort they put into this aspect and also how complex and diverse their supply chains were which added to their burden in working towards sustainability. This aspect connects with economic sustainability as these networks and relationships are the key to developing a thriving and sustainable local economy. Additionally, these businesses educate each other and enthuse each other about new sustainability measures they can undertake, creating a community of practice supporting widening circles of sustainability. This is demonstrated, for instance, by the relationship between The Grain Store in Melbourne and CERES (a fair food network) (see The Grain Store case study). These relationships are very important to sustainable cafés and restaurants and in fact more work is needed on providing customers
with more full information about their suppliers and the quality and sustainability features of their products.

Finally, in terms of treating people fairly, restaurants and cafés must exercise care for their customers in a number of ways, including food safety, quality service, accurate information and attention to needs. However, much more is done in the sustainable cafés: many of these venues seek nurturing relationships with their customers that are built on an ethics of care, mutuality and genuine commitments to building change together (see ethics section below). One key aspect of this is the new move underway to better foster the health, nutrition and well-being of patrons which has been very important in recent years as western countries suffer lifestyle diseases of growing concern.

To foster healthy eating, restaurants and cafés need to offer a diverse menu catering to many nutritional, ethical and health concerns. It is important that cafés and restaurants offer vegetarian, vegan, gluten free and other special dietary options for their clients. For inclusivity, catering to religious values such as providing halal and kosher dishes is also advisable, but a recent backlash against halal foods in Australia has illustrated this can be a difficult balancing act in times of social tensions (see Hague, 2014). More readily apparent is the need to offer healthier and lower kilojoule options in a time when obesity and lifestyle illnesses such as diabetes are on the rise in many societies.

Restaurants may also opt to offer smaller portions less expensively to encourage their patrons to not over-eat. Providing full information to patrons on nutritional values, kilojoules and provenance are also important aspects to this social sustainability commitment and staff play an important role in conveying this in an effective and positive manner. In our case studies, Motherduck of Goolwa is one example of this work.

In terms of responsible marketing, there are two concerns: consumer information and truthfulness in marketing. SRA consumer research indicated that, “85% of diners know little or nothing about the social and environmental standards of the restaurants they eat in [but] 84% said they want to know how restaurants perform in these areas” (Sustainable Restaurant Association, n.d.-a). Additionally, cafés and restaurants have an obligation to be truthful in their marketing and communications. In an era when greenwash is prevalent as some try to cash in on the consumer interest in sustainability and ethics, sustainable
restaurants need to be very careful that what they promise is what they deliver to their customers. This is in fact why a number of cafés will not market themselves as organic, because of the difficulties that can occur in reliably and consistently obtaining suitable produce. At a minimum, responsible marketing involves sustainable restaurants communicating their sustainability commitments and actions and their ethical values to their stakeholders in all means of communication. In our research with our 20 cafés and restaurants, we were very impressed with the seriousness with which they took this imperative as many of them did not in fact identify themselves as “sustainable cafés” but rather were very clear to communicate their own specific mission and focus. We also note here that a number of restaurants we interviewed did not limit themselves to responsible marketing, but rather viewed their restaurant as a tool for sustainability education, including Brothl and Sarah’s Sister’s Sustainable Café (see more on Sarah’s in Higgins-Desbiolles, Moskwa, & Gifford, 2014).

Ethics

Most businesses have a code of ethics or conduct which must be adhered to as a condition of employment. It is a statement of the ethical principles, values and behaviours expected of employees. Theoretically, every employee, even occasional contract workers, should be provided with this document because it supports high staff morale and promotes teamwork. Working with integrity is expected behaviour, particularly in terms of handling money and dealing with customers. There are also a large range of workplace ethics that are peculiar to the restaurant sector, such as the ethics of food handling and service of alcohol.

Sustainable cafés and restaurants may demonstrate particular forms of ethical engagement and care. Two frequently seen aspects are the use of fair trade products such as coffees and teas, and the engagement with issues of animal welfare and animal ethics.

Fair trade has been promoted since the 1970s when concerns grew about development in the Global South and unfair terms of trade. Fair trade can be described as being:

...about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. By requiring companies to pay sustainable prices, Fairtrade addresses the injustices of conventional trade, which traditionally discriminates against the poorest, weakest producers. It enables them to improve their position and have more control over their lives. (Fair Trade Australia, n.d.)
Fair trade products are now readily available, reflecting the increasing awareness and concern of consumers for ethical consumption practices. Fair trade certification schemes carry a degree of credibility and are easily recognised; customers support these products in the belief that the rights and welfare of the workers where the product is grown and harvested have been protected. In the restaurant sector, many now purchase and publicise their use of fair trade products and use this as one part of their total commitment to sustainability.

Animal welfare is another area of increasing concern in societies around the world and its impact is evidenced in the growing adherence to vegetarian and vegan lifestyles. There are growing concerns about industrial practices being applied to our food systems and particularly to animal husbandry. For instance author J. M. Coetzee stated:

To any thinking person, it must be obvious there is something terribly wrong with relations between human beings and the animals they rely on for food. It must also be obvious that in the past 100 or 150 years, whatever is wrong has become wrong on a huge scale, as traditional animal husbandry has been turned into an industry using industrial methods of production. (Coetzee, 2007)

Recent campaigns and activism by groups such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and Animals Australia have raised awareness concerning the inhumane conditions animals may be subjected to through intensive farming practices, transportation for processing and killing. As a result, consumers are increasingly demanding ethical animal products. This has resulted in consumer pressure for sourcing free-range eggs and ethically sourced animal products, which has had flow-on effects to the restaurant sector. In the case of sustainable cafés, this has resulted in efforts to provide consumers with ethical products, provision of information about provenance which is increasingly sourced from local, small-scale farms rather than the factory food system, and focus on offering vegetarian and vegan dishes and products. The exemplars among our case studies in this domain are Etica Ethical Pizzeria, Mozzarella Bar with its animal welfare focus, and Sarah’s Sister’s Sustainable Café and Lentil as Anything with their fully vegetarian menus. Recent research from Roy Morgan suggests that the number of Australians changing to vegetarian diets is growing; the number of people responding positively to the statement “The food I eat is all, or almost all, vegetarian” has
grown from 1,608,000 in 2009 to 1,935,000 (or 10% of the population) as of June 2013 (Research, 2013).

However, we should note that something much bigger is apparent in changing ethical consciousness and engagement. Alternative food networks and practices such as described in this report have been characterised as “building economic geographies of care through consumption” (Goodman, 2008:14). This care is multi-level including care of the self, other places, other people, other species and environments (and care through the building of relationships, particularly between producers and consumers).

Some concluding remarks and further resources

Sustainability is an increasing global concern which has placed pressures on governments, industries and consumers alike to take responsible action. With consumers being increasingly concerned about their food choices involving environmental impact, supporting local providers and creating sustainable food networks, restaurateurs have been provided with an opportunity to consider other possibilities for managing resources to meet these demands. This opportunity to foster a food tourism industry based on sustainable practices has been taken on successfully by some committed entrepreneurial restaurateurs who are engaging in creative and responsible ways of doing business. Listening to these restaurateurs inspired us to share with you the narratives and beliefs behind their daily operations and long-term visions for sustainability. We hope readers would benefit from these restaurants’ modelling of sustainability.

In this section we have tried to offer a brief but informative overview of issues in sustainability in restaurants and cafés in order to help inform and contextualise our case studies. We outlined some of the sustainability practices that can be enacted in terms of balancing the environmental, economic and social sustainability aspects by using the triple bottom line approach. Many of the issues we have considered throughout this report are connected in multiple ways, adding to the complexity that we have encountered in our attempts to map key challenges of achieving sustainability in the restaurant and café sector. For those who are keen on knowing more and accessing information in different formats, we also recommend the resources provided by the Sustainable Table website, particularly the links accessed from their “Hungry for further info” page (see http://www.sustainabletable.org.au/Hungryforinfo/tabid/62/Default.aspx). In fact, we note there is now a great deal of useful and accessible material available on the web and we encourage our readers to dig further and engage with these issues that are of great concern and importance to all of us.

We offer in the following sections our case studies from our 2014 research project undertaken in Adelaide and Goolwa in South Australia, and Melbourne in Victoria. We do not claim to have interviewed every restaurant and café showcasing aspects of sustainability
and there were many outstanding ones that we could not manage to engage due to time and funding limitations. However, the ones we did manage to study are using the capacities of hospitality venues to do more than offer great food; they are transforming their communities, modelling best practices in sustainability, and fostering communities of care which offer us hope for building a positive future. We hope their stories we have tried to capture in our case studies below help you see these inspiring trends. In the next section, we provide an overview of the four sustainable restaurant associations that have informed our study and the three locations in which our case studies are situated.

References
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**Sustainable Table, Australia**

*We believe the quickest way to appeal to people’s hearts, minds and conscience is through their stomachs. (Duncan, 2011: 1)*

Founded in 2009 by Cassie Duncan and Hayley Morris, the Sustainable Table’s first iteration was as Yaubula, a non-profit initiative fostering sustainable development. After holding some workshops focused on food issues, they soon realised that food can serve as “…an entrée to explore sustainability issues” (The Sustainable Table, n.d.-a). As Cassie explained:

> Food is something we all have to engage with; we all have to eat every day. So automatically everyone becomes included … it’s also a nicer entry point when discussing sustainability issues. But then when you actually start to dig below the surface the environmental impacts of the food we eat are actually huge, and instead of, for example, focusing on having shorter showers, if we all changed the way we eat we would actually have such a huge impact on the planet. (Cassie Duncan, pers. comm. 21 January 2015)

As the Sustainable Table website states, “with up to 60% of our eco-footprint embodied in the food that we buy there is no better place to start”. While maintaining its commitment to sustainable development, the Sustainable Table also focuses its concerns on “our environment, animals and Aussie farmers” (Give a Fork, 2014).

The Sustainable Table declares: “We are working to build an engaged community of people who want to learn about sustainable food production and how they can support a fair food system for all” (The Sustainable Table, n.d.-a). They do this by fostering educational strategies to influence individuals, consumers, producers and restaurants, and hold campaigns and events which generate discussions and dialogues. The Sustainable Table is a small non-profit organisation but its strength lies in the energy, commitment and marketing expertise of its founders.

Guiding principles for its local work include:

- engage people in learning about sustainable food production and how they can help to shape a fair and sustainable food system for all
- reconnect people with where their food comes from, and encourage them to use their

Photograph provided Sustainable Table. (Credit Matt Burke photography)
consumer dollar to influence change

- encourage food outlets to stock with local, seasonal and ethically-farmed produce
- benefit the environment by encouraging food purchasing patterns that reduce our personal eco-footprint
- support local food producers who are doing the right thing by the environment. (The Sustainable Table, n.d.-c)

One of the first projects they developed was producing a book entitled *The Sustainable Table* which intersperses food issues and sustainability concerns with great recipes from some of Victoria’s leading producers and chefs. It has an educational agenda and seeks to engage its readership in thinking about food, development and environment. This project was a great success and sold out within six months of publication; it has been followed by a second edition.

Other projects have also had an educational focus. They began to support events such as “Give a fork” in 2013 which encouraged people to host dinner parties and engage in conversations on sustainable food systems issues, such as sustainable fisheries; Sustainable Table provided hosts with information and ideas to inform these conversations.

Additionally, since its establishment, Sustainable Table has partnered with restaurants to hold events which have highlighted particular issues and worked to inform stakeholders, clients and staff, and influence “unconverted” restaurants; previous efforts have focused on sustainable fisheries and fostering zero waste strategies with the latter seeing chefs showcasing creative strategies to re-direct food waste for things like juicing or broths (Cassie Duncan pers. comm. 21 January 2015). In 2014, some 20 restaurants partnered with Sustainable Table in the “Give a fork” campaign, showing the reach of this strategy of partnership. In 2014, the focus was on the issue of waste reduction and the website concentrated attention with these words: “Every year, Aussies waste over $8 billion worth of food and throw away enough packaging to fill the MCG 9 times over. The impact is immense. It’s time we do something about it. It starts by sharing a meal...” (Give a Fork, 2014). Sustainable Table supported these events with an educational ebook on reducing waste and sought supporting funds from these events to further its work. The Sustainable Table website declared: “Share a #wastefree meal with mates during the month of October and raise awareness and funds to help build a food system that is good for the environment, fair on Aussie farmers, ethical and healthy” (The Sustainable Table, n.d.-b).
These efforts are part of a broad strategy to foster thinking, dialogue and change:

By designing challenging and creative events with our restaurant and community partners, tapping into social media networks, providing business consulting services and sharing stories and learnings through our blog site, we are empowering people to overcome today’s environmental challenges, one meal at a time. (The Sustainable Table, n.d.-a)

Sustainable Table maintains the sustainable development focus that began with Yaubula. One illustrative project is the Yaubula Solar Cooker project which raised funds for securing solar cookers for Tibet in order to provide developmental benefits for communities and reduce the environmental impacts of pollution from previous cooking methods (Yaubula, 2011).

The most important work of Sustainable Table is its educational efforts which underpin their work towards a fair and sustainable food system. On their webpage entitled “hungry for info”, they provide sobering facts to concentrate our minds on the challenges we confront (The Sustainable Table, n.d.-d). To activate people to become part of the movement for positive change, they provide accessible fact sheets on food ethics and sustainability issues and advice on “what you can do”.

Sustainable Table has big ambitions to be effective Australia-wide, but currently funding limitations result in it being most active in the states of Victoria and New South Wales (Cassie Duncan, pers. comm. 21 January 2015). Considering the transformational achievements that have been secured in such a short time by such a small team of committed, creative and skilled people, we can only imagine the possibilities if they can expand their support base further.
Green Table, Australia

Overview

Green Table Australia is an education and certification program hosted by Restaurant and Catering Australia (R&CA) that is designed to support and recognise Australian restaurants, cafés and catering businesses that are making an effort to lessen their general impact on the environment. It is based on the following premise:

*Even the smallest step, achieved with no or little investment can make a difference!* (Restaurant and Catering Australia, n.d.)

As the peak industry body in the nation, R&CA is concerned with upholding the high standards that Australia’s hospitality industry is well known for. As such, they are dedicated to maintaining and improving quality and professionalism in the hospitality sector through industry benchmarking. At the same time, they are tasked with promoting restaurants to the public to help the industry succeed. To do this they have implemented several accreditation programs, with the Green Table Program being the environmental certification program on offer. This program gives recognition to businesses that commit to and use environmentally sustainable products and practices in their operations, with the key focus areas based on water and energy conservation, waste management, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (Restaurant and Catering Australia, 2015b).

Administered by the Green Table Australia Management Committee and based on the Green Table scheme established in Canada, it was first launched in Australia in 2008 (Australian Food News, 2008). It is advertised as the first Australian environmental education and certification program for restaurant, café and catering businesses (Restaurant and Catering Australia, n.d.).

By providing a framework that assists small- and medium-sized businesses develop relevant environmentally sustainable practices, Green Table Australia aims to effect large-scale change by implementing an industry-wide approach to overall environmental sustainability. Along with the provision of education to restaurateurs on practical ideas for minimising waste, conserving energy and water and reducing their carbon footprint, Green Table Australia works to maximise impact by demonstrating that benefits can range from simple, immediate and inexpensive measures to more complex, longer term and investment intensive options.
Accreditation

Green Table Australia accreditation is offered for a cost of $100 per year through a certification process. Via a self-assessment checklist, accredited businesses are required to confirm that their business actively reduces its environmental impact and intends to continue to do so in the following ways:

- recycling all paper, glass and metal
- composting food waste or sending it to green waste
- appropriate use of stock management techniques to reduce overall waste
- using natural gas to run stoves and ovens (where gas is used); or using a minimum of 20% green electricity, or offsetting a minimum of 20% green electricity
- using energy efficient globes in all light fittings
- installing water-efficient/low-flow taps on all faucets
- installing dual flushing toilets or dual flushing cistern valves in toilets
- undertaking actions to reduce water use
- undertaking actions to reduce energy consumption
- using biodegradable and non-toxic cleaning products
- using products that are recycled, that can be recycled and are biodegradable wherever possible. (Green Table Australia, n.d.)

Upon accreditation, businesses receive a program certificate, permission to use the program endorsement logo for marketing and promotion, individual listing on the R&CA website, and the Green Table manual and guide to best practices and protocols to remain compliant.

The program aims to provide a quality benchmark for the industry but is also promoted as a means of achieving monetary savings and adding customer appeal. In advertising the program to businesses, the following benefits are promoted:

- supporting corporate social responsibility aims
- creating a point of difference from competitors
- attracting new customers
- keeping ahead of impending government legislation
- reducing operating costs through water and energy savings
- improving staff morale
- improving customer satisfaction
- contributing to a healthier world. (Restaurant and Catering Australia, 2015a)

It is primarily focused on the environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability but touches on the social or community dimensions through staff morale and customer satisfaction measures.

Sustainability pedagogy and place-making efforts

In line with the values promoted by Green Table Australia, the food service industry contributes to sustainability pedagogy in several ways, including:
• promoting corporate social responsibility in a general manner
• promoting the use of environmentally-friendly initiatives to their patrons
• raising awareness of the environmental impact of the hospitality industry through green table branding and membership
• through ongoing membership in the program, demonstrating to other hospitality businesses the cost savings that are available through reductions in water and energy use.

To progress this further, Green Table Australia could also look to undertake the following activities (for example):

• promoting fresh local foods
• focusing on sustainable agriculture, sourcing and supply chains
• collaborating with other businesses, local government and other groups and associations
• engaging with the community through local events and initiatives
• training and educating hospitality industry staff.

Also consistent with the values held by Green Table Australia, cafés and restaurants can have an impact on destination development by creating a point of difference from competitors who are not members and/or who do not undertake or promote environmentally-friendly initiatives. In locations where clusters of hospitality venues are members, they may collectively contribute to a unique experience that may attract new customers and increase customer satisfaction levels.

**Related programs**

The Green Table Program is not the only environmental program offered by R&CA. In partnership with the Queensland Government’s ClimateSmart Business Association Program, R&CA is developing a sustainability program that will enable Queensland members to incorporate sustainable best practice into their core business. As with the Green Table Program, this is aimed at creating a point of difference from competitors, providing good publicity, reducing operating costs and “contributing to a better and healthier world” (Restaurant and Catering Australia, 2015a).

In 2012–2013, R&CA also undertook an Eco-Biz Trial involving 20 restaurants in Brisbane. These restaurants participated in an eco-efficiency trial that assessed waste, material and energy (fuel and electricity) usage and costs. Using modified measurement tools for the hospitality sector, the aim was to develop strategies with businesses to reduce their costs. The outcomes and tools developed are to become available for use in other locations around Queensland in coming years.
Green Table Network

The GLOBE-managed Green Table Network was established in Canada in 2007 to acknowledge food service operators committed to improving their environmental performance by adopting a “sustainability philosophy” (Green Table Network, n.d.). The Network values the careful consideration of environmental impacts of business decisions, purchasing patterns, and daily restaurant operations ranging from water and energy use to recycling. With the catchphrase, “We put sustainability on the menu. And almost everywhere else”, the Network asks people to:

Imagine a world where food is healthier and tastier, the local community is thriving and the environmental footprint of business is as small as possible.
(Green Table Network, n.d.)

The Network encompasses the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability by ensuring members make the following minimum benchmark commitments:

- the elimination of styrofoam and non-recyclable plastics
- the implementation of comprehensive recycling programs and a commitment to diverting as many supply chain containers as possible from landfill
- using water wisely such as through upgrades to plumbing and fixtures to reduce their total ‘water footprint’
- the addition or featuring of at least one sustainable protein item on their menu (for example, third-party verified products such as Oceanwise or hormone-free meat from a local farmer)
- the installation or upgrade to efficient lighting in the kitchen, dining area, food preparation areas, storage rooms and walk-in refrigerators
- the adoption of a “Sustainability Philosophy”.

The Network also promotes and engages with a range of community and environmental events including National Aboriginal Day, Earth Day and Canada Day, and partners with a number of non-profit organisations with similar goals including the GLOBE Foundation (aimed at supporting Canada’s image as a leading source of innovative technologies and a champion of environmental business); Vancity (providing financing for green businesses); LOCO BC (strengthening small and mid-sized businesses by promoting buying local and fostering business networking); and the Campaign for Real Ale Society of British Columbia (dedicated to the promotion and responsible consumption of natural, crafted beers). Furthermore, the Network works with Culinary Art education and training institutions to help them develop curriculum that embeds sustainability principles throughout the industry (for example, menu and recipe design that promotes local and seasonal produce).
Cittaslow Goolwa, South Australia

What is Cittaslow?

Cittaslow is what is known as the “Slow Cities” movement. Simply put, a slow city is characterised by a way of living that supports people to live slow. Living slowly is said to be living well: “having the opportunity of enjoying solutions and services that allow citizens to live in their town in an easy and pleasant way” (Cittaslow International, 2011).

The movement originated in Italy in 1999 largely in response to the success of the Slow Food movement. Slow Food, also originating in Italy, links the pleasure of good food with a commitment to local communities and the environment. The Slow Cities movement accordingly aims to broaden this philosophy of Slow Food to local communities and local governments by applying ecogastronomy concepts to everyday life.

It is pronounced “chée-tah-slo”. “Citta” means “city” in Italian and in the same way that Slow Food has been promoted as an alternative to fast food, Slow Cities can be said to stand up against the fast-lane. They value traditions and traditional ways of doing things, and they challenge society to find a better balance between globalisation and a commitment to their community and the natural environment.

Cittaslow embraces the idea that human well-being is enhanced through healthy connections to the people and places where we live. To do this, the movement promotes an active involvement with one’s local community; for example, through supporting local businesses and services, people are able to help shape what happens in their community and contribute to an improved quality of life for residents.

Principles

Cittaslow is based on the following principles to encourage community development that enriches human and environmental well-being:

- encouraging diversity not standardisation
- supporting and encouraging local culture and traditions
- working for a more sustainable environment
- supporting and encouraging local produce and products
- encouraging healthy living especially through children and young people
- working with the local community to build these values
- gradually working through this process to achieve aspirations.

As a system of management for municipalities, formal certification or membership of the Cittaslow Association has produced an international network of almost 200 Slow Cities from 30 countries around the world. In 2007, the South Australian township of Goolwa on the Fleurieu Peninsula became the first town in Australia to be recognised as a Cittaslow
(Cittaslow Goolwa Incorporated, 2015). While official membership is restricted to towns with less than 50,000 people, larger cities such as Adelaide would not be prevented from adopting some of the same principles and applying them to initiatives at the neighbourhood level.

**The Township of Goolwa**

In the early 2000s, Goolwa was beginning to suffer the economic and social downturns of the closure of the River Murray Mouth for dredging purposes needed to rectify the silting up of the Mouth. The Southern Alexandrina Business Association was looking for ideas to encourage people to come to Goolwa other than for the River, which is a significant part of the life of the local community. But at that time the boats were leaving and fewer people were recreating in the region. So, in response, a Feasibility Study was conducted in 2004 to explore the possibilities for Goolwa to become a Cittaslow, and in 2005, the Alexandrina Council voted to support the Cittaslow process. Local community members were involved from the beginning with a range of workshops and public meetings being held, and in February 2007 Goolwa was declared the Australian Cittaslow network lead town.

Presently Cittaslow Goolwa has some 110 members, with membership available at the individual, family, business and group level. Membership is open to anybody and businesses and groups involved to date range from hospitality venues, such as local cafés and wineries, through to recreation groups such as the Goolwa and District Bicycle Club. The accreditation of Goolwa as a Cittaslow has facilitated links between community and business, and has helped the town to identify and promote the best things about the community, and consequently, ensure that they will continue (personal communication with Cittaslow Goolwa).

The main activities of Cittaslow Goolwa include:

- establishing a Food and Wine Group and developing a Food and Wine Code of Ethics Program
This Group develops ideas to promote an understanding of Cittaslow and Slow Food principles and develops cooperative efforts between those involved in the food and wine business. The Alexandrina Cheese Company, Beach Organics and Bombora@ Goolwa, are three well-known businesses involved in this Group.

- Developing a community garden and a weekly fruit and vegetable barrow
- Involvement in hosting conferences and events in the town
- Working with tourism and heritage attractions to develop activities and events (for example, centenary celebrations for the local paddle steamer ‘Oscar W’; food and wine gourmet breakfast as part of the SA Wooden Boat and Music Festival; establishment of Goolwa Tourism and creation of Around Goolwa with History Week; development of the Great Australian Smoke Off)
- Hosting international journalists attending Tasting Australia activities
- Involvement in town planning and environmental reports
- Supporting the introduction of the Fleurieu (McLaren Vale) Slow Food convivium
- Developing a Cittaslow Park
- Establishing the Cittaslow Centre at Signal Point, Goolwa Wharf
- Hosting an Annual Awards program to recognise the contributions of individuals, businesses and organisations whose actions contribute to Goolwa’s Cittaslow Status
- Supporting the activities of environmental groups such as South Coast Dune Care and Hindmarsh Island Land Care (Cittaslow Goolwa Incorporated, 2015).

Sustainability

The Cittaslow movement offers a way to embrace an approach to food that recognises the strong connections between plate, planet, people, politics and culture. It advocates that communities need to protect the natural environment for residents, visitors, and future generations alike.

It aligns with several sustainable food principles by contributing to thriving local economies and sustainable livelihoods by encouraging ‘buying local’. Consuming local food not only supports local producers and suppliers, but it reduces food miles which reduces the carbon footprint of the food system.

It also delivers social benefits by providing good quality food to people and supporting positive relationships among community members, and as was seen in Goolwa, for example,
giving the community confidence to have a say in the future direction of their local food industry.

However, at the same time, Cittaslow is largely about pleasure-seeking through food experiences. Following the Slow Food Association’s philosophy, “everyone has a fundamental right to the pleasure of good food and, consequently, the responsibility to protect the heritage of food, tradition, and culture that make this pleasure possible” (Slow Food, 2015). While it links the desire for good food with a commitment to the local community and the environment, the motivation is largely self-indulgent, and in a globalised world people will inevitably travel long distances to enjoy local foods in different places. Unless the whole ‘Slow’ philosophy is extended to travel and tourism more broadly, to encourage travelling shorter distances overall and enriching the touristic experience not only at the destination but while en route, there could be unwanted negative impacts as well. As such, the Cittaslow movement has the opportunity and perhaps also the responsibility to embrace and encourage the slowness of a destination as well as the mode of transport to that destination, an enjoyment of the journey as a part of the holiday, the complete touristic experience, and a wider-reaching environmental consciousness to take indirect impacts into greater consideration.

**Sustainability pedagogy and place-making efforts**

In the food service industry, restaurateurs can contribute to sustainability pedagogy in a number of ways in line with Cittaslow values, including:

- promoting and using fresh local foods
- advising their patrons where their foods come from
- teaching about local cultural particularities
- preserving and building on the unique qualities that reflect local historical roots (for example, occupying an old vacant building or continuing to serve foods traditional to the region)
- respecting the past while building for the future
- collaboration with other businesses, the community, local government and other groups and associations
- promoting a slow pace of life where slow food meets slow travel.

Also consistent with Cittaslow values, hospitality venues can contribute to place-making in their locality and have an impact on destination development through the individual and collective provision of:

- good food (i.e. a focus on quality)
- locally-grown and produced food
- gastronomic pleasure
- defending local and/or regional traditions (for example, recipes, food culture)
- providing excellence in customer service
• contribution to a unique experience that visitors will remember (and hopefully return for).

Cittaslow encourages communities to develop their hospitality venues both for locals and for visitors. In doing so, restaurateurs can help local residents and visitors to experience what is distinctive and special about a region. Visitors are then able to enjoy what is truly local and they can experience the quality of life that a place has to offer, by seeing and connecting with the local community and what it offers. The brand ‘Slow’ can bring a quality reputation with it and a town can build its attractions on cultural heritage such as historic buildings, street markets, and gastronomy. This is seen on the Fleurieu Peninsula which markets itself largely on the food and wine experience, and includes reference to local produce such as olives and almonds, fishing and seafood, farmers markets, and an immense pride in its unique food and wine products.
The Sustainable Restaurant Association

Overview

The SRA is a not-for-profit membership organisation in the United Kingdom which aims to help its “restaurant members become global leaders in sustainability” (Sustainable Restaurant Association, n.d.). The SRA offers assistance for restaurants in three key areas:

- sourcing food more sustainably
- managing resources more efficiently
- working more closely with the local community.

At the same time, it works to support consumers in making more sustainable choices when they dine out by helping them identify the restaurants that are “doing the right thing” (Sustainable Restaurant Association, n.d.).

The idea for the Association arose in 2009 during a lunch meeting between a group of restaurateurs and sustainability advocates who believed that busy restaurateurs needed a single organisation to seek advice from on the many subjects that sustainability encompasses (Sustainable Restaurant Association, 2010a). It then formally commenced in 2010 and now boasts a membership base of more than 870 business members in 2015 (Sustainable Restaurant Association, 2010c).

The SRA is not a small organisation; the structure of the SRA includes a Managing Director, Programming, Marketing and Communications staff, Public Relations and Press, an Office Manager, and a number of Accounts Managers. It also extends to Interns and Volunteers directly linked to the Association. Well-known UK chef and restaurateur Raymond Blanc acts as President and Chef Patron, taking on the role of champion and campaigner for sustainability and food ethics, asking chefs, restaurateurs and diners to join him in the movement. Furthermore there is an Advisory Network designed to ensure the SRA benefits from the expertise of leading sustainability experts, restaurateurs, social entrepreneurs, food campaigners, academics and columnists.

Philosophy

The SRA’s mission is to help restaurants become more sustainable and give diners the opportunity to choose restaurants that match their ethical and environmental standards. This is based on the understanding that food connects with landscape, soil, heritage and health, as well as strongly influencing the kind of society we are creating for tomorrow. They aim to demonstrate that the hospitality industry can change to produce good food more sustainably, and the time is now right for that change. This is reflected in their statement, “The SRA and its members are committed to a change for the better” (Sustainable Restaurant Association, n.d.).
Accreditation

The Sustainability Star Rating system used by the SRA is independently verified and recognises restaurants as 1, 2 or 3 sustainability champions. Ratings relate to a range of criteria in 14 areas of sustainability within the themes of Sourcing, the Environment, and Society:

Sourcing

1. Environmentally positive farming
2. Local and seasonal food
3. Sustainable fish
4. Ethical meat and dairy
5. Fair trade

Environment

6. Water saving
7. Workplace resources
8. Supply chain
9. Waste management
10. Energy efficiency

Society

11. Community engagement
12. Treating people fairly
13. Healthy eating
14. Responsible marketing

The ratings process is carried out online and overseen by SRA assessors. To encourage more restaurants to become members, Patron Chef Raymond Blanc writes an open letter asking chefs and restaurateurs to:

[T]hink about the food you are sourcing, how you treat your customers, staff and local community as well as how you are addressing your environmental responsibilities. If, like me, you care about these things then I am asking you to show your support. (SRA 2010d)

SRA believes it is not only the responsibility of businesses but that diners have an important role to play in supporting sustainable restaurants and encouraging those restaurants that could undertake extra action to be more sustainable. A restaurant directory helps diners identify sustainable restaurants and diners are able to join the Friends of the SRA group.
**Operations**

The SRA consider not just the actions and behaviours of restaurants and diners but their own sustainability too. They achieved The Planet Mark – an international recognition of the highest sustainability standards – in recognition of their efforts to reduce their carbon emissions and improve their water, energy and waste efficiency. By pledging to reduce their carbon emissions year by year, the SRA sets an example to other businesses and embeds sustainability into their culture. In essence, the SRA is “practicing what they preach” (Sustainable Restaurant Association, 2010b).

**Sustainability pedagogy and place making efforts**

In addition to practicing what they preach by setting a positive example and entrenching sustainability into their culture, other contributions to sustainability pedagogy include:

- consciously keeping sustainability on the news agenda at both the local and national level
- gaining and sharing relevant, up-to-date information in the sustainability sector through the assistance of the Advisory Network as well as members themselves
- training of, and investment in, ongoing positions for SRA interns and volunteers
- provision of the Continuing Professional Development accredited SRA Sustainability Training program to help improve sustainability practices across the food service sector, suitable for all front and back of house staff
- the development and implementation of the University Catering Rating scheme
- consultancy and training services in sustainability
- providing a model that demonstrates that good food can be produced sustainably no matter what style of restaurant
- providing a model whereby member businesses are able to reassure their customers that they are doing the right thing
- offering free online resources (for example, the Food Waste Tool kit, Case Studies, Sustainability Fact Sheets and Sustainability Demonstrations)
- an Annual Awards program recognising and promoting best practice and sustainability efforts
- supporting and engaging with community events and activities such as Earth Hour, the ‘Save the 6th Plate Event’, and School Food Plans
- running campaigns such as Too Good to Waste, which was aimed at addressing restaurant food waste; this award-winning campaign encouraged restaurants to give patrons doggy bags to take home their leftovers.

Through engaging with a wide membership base of chefs, restaurateurs and diners, the SRA aims to show the wider hospitality industry that there is a demand for ethical and sustainable food, that change can happen, and that the time for change is now. With members ranging from fine dining to casual cafés and fish and chip shops, the model is designed to demonstrate that “good sustainability can translate into good business” for all hospitality venues (Sustainable Restaurant Association, 2010d).
Patron Chef Raymond Blanc acknowledges that British cuisine has undergone a transformation and should be proud of its standing among the best in the world, but at the same time stresses that diners need to increase the pressure on restaurants to prevent the UK from missing out on the chance to become the world leader in sustainability. The Sustainability Ratings system can help deliver this because when restaurants achieve Champion ratings, the SRA shares this good news with press, restaurant guides and critics.

The SRA is also endorsed for its ability to help the UK to capitalise on its reputation as one of the finest food nations in the world (Sustainable Restaurant Association, 2010d). By encouraging the “from field to fork” concept, it helps strengthen this branding and protect UK food heritage. Local ingredients are encouraged when they are in season and while this generally reduces the carbon footprint associated with transporting and storing food (or food miles), it also tends to ensure fresher food and therefore higher quality meals. Importantly, it also invests in the local economy and, combined with their campaign for environmentally positive farming, the SRA helps the UK protect its landscape and reduce biodiversity loss – important for both the environmental and tourism industries.

The SRA state that transparency is key; through the promotion of responsible marketing they place a ban on greenwash, and with attention given to the many different subjects that sustainability encompasses, they address more than just negative environmental impacts and provide more than just a benchmarking program.

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Adelaide, South Australia

Adelaide, the capital city of South Australia, is home to some 1.3 million residents and is often touted for its liveability by both national and global rankings (The Economist, 2012). The city is often promoted for its food and wine, and arts and culture. While Tourism Australia (2015) define Adelaide as “elegant and cultured”, the South Australian Tourism Commission (n.d.-a) promotes the city as having a “vibrant food scene” (South Australian Tourism Commission, n.d.-c) and being the “gateway to some of Australia’s best wine country”. Building on Adelaide’s traditional City of Churches image, Lonely Planet (2015b) describe how:

*Multicultural flavours infuse Adelaide’s restaurants; there’s a pumping arts and live-music scene; and the city's festival calendar has vanquished dull Saturday nights. There are still plenty of church spires here, but they’re hopelessly outnumbered by pubs and a growing number of hip bars tucked away in lanes.*

Indeed a number of award-winning tourism activities are based around Adelaide’s food and wine culture in addition to its mix of restaurants, pubs and cafés. Local farmer’s markets held throughout Adelaide are popular for the opportunity they give people to buy fresh, in-season goods direct from the producers, and the Adelaide Central Market is certainly one of Adelaide’s iconic tourism attractions. Described as “an exercise in sensory bombardment: a barrage of smells, colours and yodelling stallholders selling fresh vegetables, breads, cheeses, seafood and gourmet produce”(Lonely Planet, 2015a), the market is popular not only for its quality produce but for the experience it offers in shopping amongst the noise, fresh food smells and atmosphere.

The National Wine Centre, located on the outskirts of the city centre adjacent to the Adelaide Botanic Garden, is another major tourism attraction of Adelaide. Boasting an interactive wine experience known as the Wine Discovery Journey that was awarded the Best Tourism Initiative at the 2013 Australian Hotel Industry Awards for Excellence, the National Wine Centre is a place for visitors to learn about wine, its position within the international market, and the relationship between food and wine (National Wine Centre of Australia – The University of Adelaide, 2014). However, it is not only wine that Adelaide is known for – Coopers, the largest Australian-owned brewery, is also based in Adelaide, and a wide range of food and cultural events are also on offer such as Tasting Australia (a biennial food fair), Cheesefest, the German Schützenfest, Greek Glendi Festival, and the South Australian Living Artists (SALA) Festival where numerous cafés and restaurants double as art galleries for a month annually. All of these events can be said to play their role in Adelaide’s food tourism experience.
Adelaide has also developed a reputation as Australia’s greenest city (South Australian Tourism Commission, (n.d.-b) extending from the transport and design scene to the events and hospitality scene. Several of Adelaide’s major hotels and events are carbon neutral, and recycling and resource recovery has a long history in South Australia, especially with regard to beverage containers. The Adelaide Convention Centre’s worm farm comprises some 800,000 worms to convert food waste into plant food, and the Adelaide Central Market recycles more than 85% of its waste. The Eat Local SA initiative helps people locate venues that serve and sell South Australian meals or specialty products through the display of the “Eat Local SA” branding at food service venues, cellar doors, farm gate markets, retailers and experience venues where relevant.

Within this context, a growing number of cafés and restaurants have started to embrace Adelaide’s commitment to sustainable living. With a vast number of businesses in the city and surrounds to compete with, an increasing “foodies” population and a heightened awareness of environmental issues, a focus on sustainability has become an important point of difference for the cafés and restaurants highlighted in this report. By embracing a philosophy of sustainability, such cafés and restaurants help interweave Adelaide’s food scene with its “green” scene, creating places visited and enjoyed by locals and tourists alike. The initiatives and activities – from the promotion of local food, music and artists to the commitment shown to the “reduce, re-use, recycle” mantra – also helps strengthen connections within the local community and build on Adelaide’s self-pride and identity.

Some specific examples of how sustainable cafés and restaurants enhance Adelaide’s sense of place include:

- local sourcing to support the fruit and vegetable growers of the Adelaide Hills and Adelaide Plains
- local sourcing to support the winemakers of the Adelaide Hills, Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale and further afield in the State
- local sourcing to support Adelaide’s larger and smaller breweries
- encouraging healthy living and healthier communities through providing fresh food choices
- engaging with local artists through the involvement in art displays and festivals such as SALA
- supporting local musicians, poets and comedians through the live music scene and as venues for shows and festivals such as the Adelaide Fringe
- engaging with local residents through the provision of unique venues, including pop-up eateries, and by doing so supporting diversity not standardisation and “big brands”
- providing an increasing number of al fresco style dining venues which provide opportunities for people-watching and help create friendly, welcoming streets
- through Eat Local SA, engaging with visitors and locals through a blog that takes people on “culinary adventures across South Australia’s regions” (Eat Local SA, n.d.)
• demonstrating their commitment to working with the community for mutual sustainability goals such as describing their environmental philosophy or ethical choices to patrons on their menu, website or walls.

References


Sarah’s Sister’s Sustainable Café: A model of “profitable sustainability” in the seaside suburb of Semaphore in Adelaide

Ours is a model of “cradle to grave” sustainability – starting with a recycled heritage building, recycled furniture, composting club and more. (Interview Stuart Gifford 12 January 2015)

Sarah’s Sister’s Sustainable Café in Semaphore was established in 2005. It is co-owned by a couple with more than 35 years in the restaurant sector; they first started with Sarah’s Café in 1978 on Hutt Street in Adelaide’s CBD. It is a vegetarian café but it is by no means preachy on this ethos, instead preferring to let great food prepared well speak for itself. As the title of Sarah’s Sister’s suggests, it is all about sustainability. But this isn’t a gimmick; as co-owner Stuart Gifford explained in our interview, “We were quite disciplined... we adopted the name with the word sustainable in our title only when we knew we could commit to (and this was our own rules) ...making a 50% reduction overall [in waste and energy reductions] in comparison to taking the route of a normal café” (pers. comm. 12 January 2015).

Stuart’s life history was formative on his vision for using the café as a vehicle for sustainability. In his youth he trained as a designer and had his first eco job in the 1970s with the idealistic project to develop Monarto as a sustainable city model, offering an alternative where “designing with nature” was intended to create better environmental and social outcomes for residents. This project was cancelled and Stuart found himself co-owning a private business in the restaurant sector.

As his statement above on “cradle to grave sustainability” suggests, Sarah’s Sister’s has been carefully designed and managed with holistic sustainability in mind. This starts with the creative re-use of a heritage building and builds with the principles of “passive design” using...
the natural environment and design concepts to reduce a businesses’ ecological footprint. In the case of Sarah’s Sister’s, this includes making the best of the micro-climate offered by this beachside suburb in Adelaide’s Mediterranean type of climate, which offers moderating sea breezes that can be harnessed for cooling through an open back to the café. Additionally the northern orientation to this open back allows the business to take advantage of the sun’s heating in winter with the open back having retractable clear plastic screening for inclement weather. The business began with a focus on reducing its ecological footprint by 50%.

Stuart communicated a concept of his work through the café as providing “a model of profitable sustainability” (pers. comm. 12 January 2015) which he noted is very important in influencing the hospitality sector to embrace sustainability more fully. Describing the cost
savings that energy efficiency and waste reductions can deliver makes sound business sense, according to Stuart, and can deliver an edge in business competitiveness. While he is motivated by a passion for sustainability, he pragmatically realises that the wider transitions necessary in the hospitality sector can be nudged by this sound business logic.

A key to reduction in food wastage is a menu based on the “plat du jour”. Stuart explained, “A lot of the ideas came from the old Parisian cafés and the centre point of those is the plat du jour or dish of the day ...the Parisian workers’ café where quite a lot of regulars go every day ...they give people the dish that’s available ... and that’s really important for wastage. This is an aspect of sustainability which for us is huge; it’s not quite zero waste because in the commercial situation you can't do that, but it's very close to it” (pers. comm. 12 January 2015). Sarah’s Sister’s uses local and seasonal foods for these dishes, which fosters sustainability in multiple ways, including reducing food miles, promoting healthy and nutritious foods and educating customers to appreciate what is in season. Quality local ingredients and local beers and wines are the feature of Sarah’s menu. On their Google page, Sarah’s names their premium, local suppliers, including Coopers beers, Temple Bruer wines, Haigh’s chocolates, Woodside Cheeses, Golden North ice cream and Beerenberg jams (see Google.com, 2015). This creates self-sustaining local economies where businesses support each other and together grow the prosperity of their regions.

Sarah’s Sister’s also makes contributions to the social sustainability of its community. They have hosted the Future Food Festival, a Vertical Garden Cities expo, regular green wine events, and an annual Winter Solstice event. The Future Food Festival, in association with Adelaide Eco-Info Exchange, was a gathering held in 2011 to promote local food, wine, beer and ideas for a more sustainable future. The Vertical Garden Cities Expo in 2012 illustrated design solutions for Adelaide suburbs and a sustainable future for earth by envisioning desirable and affordable sustainable living environments, city farms, and eco and urban tourism. Sarah’s Sister’s green wine events have informed customers about more sustainable and locally grown wines and thereby generated income for local vignerons. Stuart has also been a key catalyst for getting Adelaide’s famous Fringe Festival to come to the suburb of Semaphore and Sarah’s has served as a Fringe Venue for a number of years.
The most exciting new relationship for Sarah’s Sister’s is that developed with Alberton Primary School. This local school has a community garden for the students and they approached Stuart to see if the café could use their produce. What has developed is an ongoing relationship where produce comes to the café, with plans for food wastes for composting returning to the school. Through this collaboration conversations are generated about our food, its supply and our larger choices. This is a new development that demonstrates Stuart’s commitment to building a more sustainable future through the use of the café as a tool to start conversations. Even though it is one of the oldest restaurant businesses in Adelaide, it is social media savvy. Stuart has harnessed social media, particularly Twitter, to engage in conversations internationally about transitioning to more sustainable lifeways; through these diverse efforts, one can see a concerted campaign to drive change working from the local to the global levels and back again.

As a result of all of these efforts, the sustainability of Sarah’s Sister’s has come in for considerable attention from a variety of sources. For instance, the Australian Civic Trust publically recognised Sarah’s in 2007 claiming “Stuart Gifford has driven his businesses with a strong focus on the environment and has used them to educate and enthuse the public... [he] has set a standard that is an environmental and social model in business and the built environment” (Australian Civic Trust, 2007:8). Sarah’s Sister’s was selected as a finalist in 2013 in the “community” category in the Advertiser’s Food Awards in which Sarah’s was described as “one eco-step ahead of the rest”. It was also named in the list of Adelaide’s top 50 restaurants and in the list of the top ten community restaurants (Mattsson, 2013). In 2014, Women’s Health Magazine recognised Sarah’s Sister’s as “one of the healthiest café in Australia” (Midena, 2014). Academics have also noticed Sarah’s and it has been written up as a case study in leading tourism and leisure journals (see Higgins-Desbiolles, Moskwa, & Gifford, 2014; Moskwa, Higgins-Desbiolles, & Gifford, 2014).

Customers recognise the sustainability message. Recently one food blogger posted:

*From the outside, this place looks like a small boring café, but the inside is somewhat different. At the rear is decking which overlooks a beautiful nursery. It’s almost like being in the French countryside. With regards to sustainability, the café is based inside a disused 1860’s heritage building which has a passive low energy design. It uses orientation and microclimate to reduce energy emissions by up to 50%... there aren’t many places that can say they are truly sustainable.* (Adelaide Food Central, 2015)
As one customer commented on Sarah’s Sister’s Facebook page, “there are so many reasons to love this restaurant. The food is seasonal, home cooked goodness. If you want a place to share your love and passion for rustic, local vegetarian food, this is it!” (see comment on Facebook, 2015). Many agree – Sarah’s Sister’s is rated as number 1 out of Semaphore’s 41 restaurants by TripAdvisor (May, 2015).

References
The Organic Market and Café, Stirling: Supporting the people who produce the food we eat

Commitment to serving trustworthy wholesome organic food that nourishes.

The Organic Market and Café nestled in a leafy hub in the heart of Stirling is an iconic venue in the Adelaide Hills, serving locally-grown organic produce. This business was established in 1982 as a fresh organic market for local growers and was extended in 1992 to include an organic café. The business (now family-run) includes an export arm, as well as facilities for online shopping and home delivery. This popular business has a competitive advantage, due to its established brand and the uniqueness of being a market and café combined (Baker Marketing Pty Ltd., 2012:2). The café has a warm and friendly communal atmosphere that makes you feel at ease. Grahame Murray, the owner of the business, is passionate about sourcing certified organic and biodynamic foods with a local provenance, and says his vision, “[r]ight from day one, what we wanted to do was to get people eating properly – eating well, and we wanted to give them the opportunity to do that and that really hasn’t changed” (pers. comm. December 18th 2014). He refers to this as “grassroots sustainability”. The café has healthy and nutritious seasonal menu options for various dietary preferences, as well as innovative fresh juices, smoothies, coffees, teas, organic beers and wines (Myfoodlink, 2015). The Organic Market and Café has qualified for the Green Table Australia certification under a joint sustainability program between Zero Waste SA and Restaurant & Catering SA. Their many awards include, Environmental Sustainability: Savour “Green Table” Restaurant & Catering Australia (SA) 2012, Best SA Organic Produce Retailer: Biological Farmers of Australia 2009, 2010, 2011, Inaugural National Award: Best Organic Independent Retailer: Organic Federation of Australia Inc., Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation 2001 and Café of the Year SA & NT: Sugar Australia 2010.

Grahame Murray is originally from Sydney, and had moved to Adelaide to take on employment with the Adelaide State Theatre Company. He says that he was always interested in organic growing, and moving to Adelaide gave him the opportunity to “live on a nice green patch” and pursue his interest in hobby farming. Grahame had bought 20 acres of land at Scott Creek in Adelaide to grow organic fruit and vegetables which he then sold on a small scale. He had also become very involved in The Soil Association of South Australia which was in operation before organic certification had become a key concept; “It was one of the biggest [associations] in Australia actually, as far as a group of like-minded people who are interested in sustainability” was concerned, in terms of “looking after the soil, better way of eating, etc.”, says Grahame. At the time, the current business was a small shop that sold local produce and whenever he visited Adelaide, he would visit the shop. In fact, it was the shop itself that had enticed him to take the theatre company job in Adelaide;
“the local dairy farmers bringing in the milk and other people bringing in locally fresh bread ... it was everything that I had ever dreamed of. It was home! So from there we were customers obviously and we were groupies”. He says that shortly after moving to Adelaide he and his wife rented the shop and then several years later when it came up for sale, decided to leave the theatre company, and bought the business. They were joined by his sister from New Zealand, who took on the position of manager as she had prior experience working in a vegetarian restaurant and had a very strong organic interest in “clean food”.

The trio’s passion for nourishing people through wholesome good food continues to this day. Their food is unadulterated, preservative and GMO free, certified organic, largely vegetarian, locally sourced from small businesses, fresh, nutritious, and also flavorsome. The café’s menu is now 70% organic. Grahame, though wanting that figure to increase, says that he has to be pragmatic about it: “[w]hen organic onions cost $60 a bag and you can buy them for $18 you don’t use dishes with organic onions – you’ve got to be realistic otherwise we would have to inflate our prices to an extent where people wouldn’t support it. So we’ve tried to find that balance of actually having good whole food and making it a whole food experience for people” (pers. comm. December 18th 2014). The Organic Market and Café prides itself on providing certified organic food, to ensure that the produce is GMO free by getting suppliers who can guarantee their product. Grahame says that for him it is all about integrity and caring for the well-being of customers who consume not only for reasons of taste and supporting sustainable food, but also for various health reasons.
The business’s target market comprises of those interested in wholesome food and good coffee, health and fitness and socialising. These are young mums, couples and friendship groups some of whom are from the city, professionals who enjoy the Stirling environment and to a lesser extent overseas tourists who have heard of the brand through word of mouth or searching the internet (Baker Marketing Pty Ltd., 2012:3-4). A large percentage of their customers are local residents. A customer needs analysis revealed that the qualities most sought after from them were: access to quality foods that are wholesome, trusted source of brands and organic produce, the need to be part of the sustainability movement, authenticity, sense of community and social interaction (Baker Marketing Pty Ltd., 2012:6). In November 2012, Baker Marketing reviewed the business’s marketing position and identified that the points of difference/ uniqueness include that it is the only shop in SA that sells solely organic fruit and vegetables, the café food is all fresh and organic where ever possible, it is family-owned and run, has a strong community focus, is the only store and café outlet in the Adelaide Hills, and actively promotes commitment to sustainability and locally sourced products (Baker Marketing Pty Ltd., 2012:9).

Care for the environment has been a core value of the market and café; “ensuring that we just leave something behind … that will actually be there to enrich lives … and people are given the opportunity to understand it [sustainability] and to hopefully become part of it as well”, says Grahame (pers. comm. December 18th 2014). He has a long-term view of sustainability and takes pride in continuous improvement to the business’s sustainability practices. Progress is monitored by having formal resource management systems, measurements criteria and industry assessments in place. “The Organic Market and Café recognize that you never ‘arrive in regards to sustainability’, but continuous review of your environment performance and ongoing improvements are key” (Rawtec Pty Ltd, 2010:1). The business joined Zero Waste SA’s Industry Program in 2010 to refine and extend ways to improve waste minimisation and resource efficiency (Zero Waste SA). An energy diagnostic assessment undertaken in 2011 confirms that this outlet has “an excellent culture in regards to sustainability, and is making good progress with improving its environmental performance” (Roberts, 2011:9). They are certainly a leader in sustainability initiatives. They were one of the first to adopt an online carbon accounting system in South Australia to measure and improve their performance.
They also have one of the most effective organics recycling systems in the industry. Grahame believes electric cars are the future and they are the first South Australian business outside central Adelaide to join the ChargePoint Network which is providing a power source for hybrid and electric vehicles across Australia (Zero Waste SA). Their sustainability initiatives involve zero waste practices, including a local closed loop recycling system (Rawtec Pty Ltd, 2010:20), complementary electric vehicle recharging stations, giving priority to value-added, energy-efficient and multiple-use products, using recycled materials and compostable packaging, recycling food and other waste products, and deploying rain water tanks for toilet flushing (Zero Waste SA). One of the strongest aspects of their sustainability undertakings is using compostable packaging, such as calico bags with biodegradable foam and compostable liners (which could be used as bin liners by customers). “It’s a whole area that we’ve really developed within ourselves. We got a grant through Zero Waste”, says Grahame.

The educational aspect of sustainability through the café takes place at a more subtle level; for example, Grahame says rather than preaching to staff, “it’s having systems in place and instructing them on what to do, so in a way it’s nice to think that we are actually subliminally changing them too” (pers. comm. December 18th 2014). Customers and the general public are educated informally through postings on social and conventional media including talk-back radio programs, brochures made available at the café, labelling of products, menu options, and through participation in local community events (for example, WOMAD).

The café is very much embedded in the local community and creates a sense of place. The café acts as a social forum, and Grahame says that people feel comfortable being there on their own, and a lot of single people have become friends and social groups have formed: “It’s a community café ... people have met here and then formed connections ... We’ve actually made it so it’s comfortable for people to come and join ... People come and sit here and chat and then it becomes something they do, two or three times a week” (pers. comm. December 18th 2014).

The Organic Market and Café has been a sponsor of the annual Christmas Pageant, which is an important event for the Adelaide community. Grahame and his team have committed time and resources to creating extravagant floats for the event and consider this part of
their community support. Another strong aspect of the café is its relationship with its staff. There are 57 staff members of different age groups, and many of them have been working there for a very long time. Grahame fosters a friendly work environment that promotes well-being, and there are strong social connections that have formed between staff in the workplace. Staff have much autonomy in the daily operations and maintain ownership and pride in their work. Supporting local suppliers, for example Kalangadoo organic apple juice, Rio organic coffees, Woodside cheese, Mylor bakery bread, Lobethal milk, also keeps food miles down (Yelp, 2015). Grahame says that affordable sustainability can be modelled by example, without being too purist and rigid. The business has sustained itself economically for 33 years and the café has had continuous growth. In fact, it had to be expanded to include further seating indoors, on the verandah and in a garden setting under the trees due to popular demand from both locals and visitors alike. However, Grahame says that profit is not a driver for him: “You’ve got to make profit otherwise you don’t have a business but it’s never been a driver, because this business for me has always – it’s a way of life … I’m basically not a materialistic person anyway, so that’s never been a part of my life” (pers. comm. December 18th 2014).

References
Red Lime Shack: Reviving and renewing Port Adelaide

Real whole food, intelligently constructed to energise the body and lift the mind. Locally sourced, made from scratch, for vibrant people. (Red Lime Shack, 2015)

Now three years old, Steph Taylor’s café, the Red Lime Shack in Port Adelaide, is leading the way in efforts to revitalise and renew Adelaide’s rundown inner Port area. This vegan and vegetarian café is more than what it seems and is well worth a bit of investigating.

Steph sees good nutrition as an important and perhaps often overlooked aspect of sustainability. She stated, “And it’s food, what we put in our body has so much to do with sustainability because if you’re eating properly you don’t need as much and you’re not looking for something – you’re not in a bad mood and feeling like a zombie and wondering around half asleep because you’ve had crappy cheap food that’s come from the other side of the world. Your body just can’t cope with that but if you’re eating good food all those nutrients are answering all the questions that you’re body has, and you have energy to do more and you’re a happier person, you’re a lighter being and I think that has a huge impact” (pers. comm. 20 January 2015). As the menu states, “We take whole food and intelligently construct it to energise the body and lift the mind. Locally sourced, made from scratch, for vibrant people” (Red Lime Shack menu 2015).
The Red Lime Shack’s menu notes it is often called “the Port community hub”. When established, Steph placed her business on St Vincent Street in Port Adelaide, which is adjacent to a mix of local and state government offices, boarded up heritage buildings and shop fronts, and social services serving the poorer communities located in these western suburbs of Adelaide. She consciously chose this location to bring nutritious food to these diverse community segments and to reach new people. The Red Lime Shack offers an inclusive space where all types of people are welcome, from the nearby office workers to the more down and out of the Port. The cosy atmosphere created by pre-loved furniture and fit-out, the new feature of a book exchange, a communal piano in the corner, and a place for local buskers and a tarot card reader to perform make this a place welcoming to all. One clear demonstration of inclusivity in this community which needs it, is the “suspended coffee” scheme which allows customers of means to “pay it forward” and purchase coffees for the benefit of those less fortunate. Its implementation at the Shack is done a little differently to ensure the dignity of the recipients and to optimise its distribution: local counsellors and non-profit group coordinators are harnessed to provide the disadvantaged of the community with cards bearing two tokens that can be redeemed for two coffees or one smoothie (Steph Taylor, pers. comm. 20 January 2015).

*The dream for this place is to be like the heart centre of Port Adelaide. That’s what I wanted Red Lime Shack to be.* (Steph Taylor pers. comm. 20 January 2015)
Since its establishment three years ago, the Shack has been a catalyst to building community and fostering networks. Perhaps the most important work that Steph Taylor has undertaken is creating and then maintaining the “Wild at Hart” Sunday markets at Hart’s Mill on the Port riverfront which has brought a vibrancy to the Port and served to connect farmers to their markets. Steph has also masterminded unique events or supported community events which have added to the renewal dynamic underway in Port Adelaide. These have included the Adelaide Fringe Festival’s events in the Port, the Wonderwalls Festival of 2015, Port Adelaide Dolphin Days, the South Australian Living Artists Festival and a Carivalesque Laneway Event in 2015.

With its derelict buildings, Port Adelaide looks seedy and rundown in some places. But the Red Lime Shack has fostered a new sense of civic engagement with its “Shack Gorilla Cleaning Crew” who periodically plan clean-ups around the area, cleaning the outside of buildings. Steph noted, “So we have done a pub on the corner, which is the main intersection to Port Adelaide that’s got the dirty pub over there. So for Christmas – our Christmas present to Port Adelaide was to clean that” (pers. comm. 20 January 2015). Not content with making the Port cleaner, more connected and engaged, the Shack has also turned its attention to the spirit of the Port. In 2013, the Shack supported the Red Ripple Effect encouraging its customers to engage in “random acts of kindness”; in her interview, Steph stated, “We love Port Adelaide and are constantly talking about the area in glowing, positive terms – a wave of positivity begins with a single act, causing a ripple effect that impacts upon the community in profound and unpredictable ways” (Spain, 2013).

In the interview with us, it was apparent that Steph values relationships and knows how to build networks that are integral to her achieving the strategic vision that drives her. In discussing her work with us, it was evident that networks with the Port Adelaide and Enfield Council, the South Australian Tourism Commission, Renewal SA (the South Australian government’s agency for urban renewal and development), other local businesses, non-profit organisations, media and artists were well developed. Steph stated, “So we just get involved somehow – someone asks us and we

Blackboard menu at the Red Lime Shack. (Photo F. Higgins-Desbiolles)
always say yes and that’s the difference; we extend ourselves and sometimes ridiculously so” (pers. comm. 20 January 2015).

With all of these inspired initiatives to build community, it is important to note that the Red Lime Shack has not forgotten its commitment to delivering good, healthy food to customers and this is appreciated. One comment posted on Urbanspoon claimed:

This is the place if you want to be in the Port AND simultaneously enjoy fresh, healthy food served with a smile (apart from the odd staffing error!!). But also if you want to sing, read poetry, show a short film festival, or be in on the action. Yes it is vegan and yes it does raw cakes and healthy smoothies but unlike some others, RLS is a no-nonsense café: there isn't an ounce of pretentiousness or try-hardness here. (2014)

References
Café Troppo: Designed for sustainability

Just like the eco-housing building we are nestled underneath, our ethos here at the café centres around sustainability, the environment and the community. Every decision involved in creating this place has been made with this in mind. We aim to tread as lightly as possible on this earth, and are trying to achieve this through everything we use here: from the produce we source and cleaning products we use as well as how we deal with the waste we produce. Sustainability is something we are very passionate about and feel we can demonstrate it in small ways and open this dialogue through Café Troppo. (n.d.)

Café Troppo is a new and trendy café on Whitmore Square in the southwest corner of Adelaide’s CBD; it only opened in May, 2012 and yet it has already receiving accolades and attention. As one comment noted, this spot is right on trend: “Café Troppo has a very hipster-ish vibe going on in the decor and the food on offer, which adds to the experience a great deal” (Yelp, 2014). But there is more to the venue than fashion and hipster chic.

Café Troppo won the City of Adelaide prize in the 2014 South Australian Architecture Awards. This is not surprising considering that the origins of the café are rooted in a competition run by the Adelaide City Council for an eco-housing development in the early 2000s. Architect Phil Harris of Troppo Architects won the competition to build a three story apartment block featuring ecological and equity commitments in its planning and design as he built Adelaide’s first “affordable eco-housing”. Harris left a space for a café on the bottom level of the complex, and when it remained un-letted, he and his family took up the challenge in creating a sustainable café in this urban space.

The location is a key factor in its social orientation. Phil Harris has stated:
There’s a lot of urban reality about the Square, a lot of humanity, a visible sense of community and plenty of scope for engaging in the sharing and caring we need to achieve in making our city the best and richest it can be. (Already Home Adelaide, n.d.)

This location on Whitmore Square features not only the affordable eco-housing of the Café Troppo building, but also shelters for the homeless, sobriety services and social services for the marginalised. Also nearby is the community of Christie Walk which is an urban eco-village.

Obviously these origins mean that the architectural design is a big feature of the environmental sustainability of the business. This includes building orientation, use of design features for capturing breezes and the integration of recycled materials in the fit-out. One innovation that has both practical and aesthetic appeal is the system of broad sliding doors and screens that optimise the café space for all seasons and which create an appealing link between indoor and outdoor space. Following Troppo Architects eco-philosophy, it is as if the site is a living organism; as Maddie Harris described it: “So the way it’s designed is this whole kind of skin of the space can be completely open or half open or you can block out the wind or let it in. Like it is really interactive and that’s another key aspect” (Harris, pers. comm. 12 January 2015). The furniture is made from recycled Australian timber and recycled hessian coffee bags, and vertical planters provide the herbs for the kitchen.

Display at Café Troppo communicating the seasonality of foods. (Photo F. Higgins-Desbiolles)
The philosophy of reduce, recycle, re-use is strong; all waste is recycled, all organic waste is composted on site for collection by a band of supporting gardeners, and the crockery and cutlery are either locally made, lowest-energy-in-manufacture imports, or sourced as quality second-hand items.

Manager and chef Maddie Harris works on the principle of a dynamic, seasonal menu with the weekday menu being changeable and displayed on a blackboard. Harris stated, “We source ingredients as organically and locally as possible”. Local producers featured include B.-d. Farm Paris Creek milk, Barossa bacon, Laucke flour, organic Australian adzuki beans and Rohde’s Free Range Eggs. The nature of the business as a family affair with an at-home atmosphere is evident in the use of “dad’s homemade tomato sauce” (Spain, 2013)

Maddie’s brother Alex Harris is not only co-manager of Café Troppo, he is also a musician and brings another key influence to the café. Café Troppo serves as a music venue for local musicians and is part of the push to keep a vibrant live music scene in Adelaide. Maddie Harris comments, “A big part of our ethos is engaging with the community...We have quite a big focus on encouraging live and local music... it’s a nice setting for young local musicians” (Spain, 2013).

An analysis of commentary on the web indicates that Café Troppo’s pedagogy is recognised and is having some impact on its stakeholders. For instance, Timeout Adelaide described Café Troppo as: “A sustainable café selling fairtrade coffee and organic produce wherever possible, this is where you go for a feel-good meal” (Timeout Adelaide, 2012). On the Urbanspoon page for Café Troppo, a food blogger noted:

*I really like how they change up the menu every season to ensure only the freshest local produce is used and make an effort to be environmentally sustainable. Definitely somewhere I would recommend with affordable meals that make you feel good about yourself and the environment!* (Café Troppo, 2014)
References
Good Life Modern Organic Pizza: World’s first carbon neutral pizza

Our philosophy is pretty simple: if you have good food, good wine and good friends, you’re in for a Good Life. (Good Life, 2015)

In 2003, Good Life Modern Organic Pizza began selling pizza featuring organic ingredients before it became trendy. In fact it is credited with offering Australia’s first certified organic pizza (Tope, 2013). Originally starting with the energy of three brothers, it now relies on two brothers, Jake and Marty Greenrod, running organic pizza restaurants in three Adelaide locations (the CBD, the seaside suburb of Glenelg and the upmarket location of North Adelaide).

There are multiple levels of sustainability exhibited by Good Life. Of course primary are the organic ingredients featured on the menu, which come with certification from the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia NASAA (see http://www.nasaa.com.au). But there is more to Good Life than that. As the website states, “We source produce that’s organic, fresh, in season and from regional South Australia” (Good Life, 2015). Good Life has built strong networks with local producers so that the quality and the flavours of these locally-sourced ingredients can be appreciated by their discerning clientele. In our interview with Jake Greenrod, co-owner of the business, he declared, “The wine list has been a hundred percent South Australian for twelve years now” (pers. comm. 19 January 2015). South Australians have begun to appreciate the quality of their fine food and fine wines in the last decade and so featuring local foods and providing consumer information is a sure-fire way to develop a loyal following.
Good Life’s owners show innovation and a keen eye to where hospitality should go. On their website, Good Life asserts, “We invented the world’s first carbon neutral pizza” (Good Life, 2015). This was achieved by working with the company Balance Carbon from about 2006 to evaluate the three restaurants’ carbon footprints and then arriving at a way to offset this. As Jake Greenrod explained, “Each year we get audited by Balance Carbon and I think roughly it was about three hundred and fifty tonnes were our footprint for the three restaurants and then we offset that” (pers. comm 19 January 2015). Good Life also hosts events which resonate with these commitments such as the annual Earth Hour event held in March which was created to draw the public’s attention to global warming and engaging people in solutions.

Another characteristic of Good Life on Hutt Street in the south of the CBD is its location in this key restaurant and foodie section of the City. It has an ideal location in a heritage bluestone building that was once the home of Neddy’s Restaurant – famous as Cheong Liew’s business in which he became known for creating Asian fusion cuisine in the 1980s (Whitley, n.d.). The food culture perhaps has imbued the business; as David Whitley noted “In Adelaide, even the pizza joints are run by people who care about their food” (n.d.).
In 2014, the Greenrods returned to their roots in wine making with the establishment of McMurtrie Road Wines, featuring Happy Days and Reincarnation Red; “Creating our own wine seemed like a natural progression for the Good Life philosophy, especially as the wine is handmade on our two-acre vineyard in McLaren Vale” (Jake Greenrod cited in Bley, 2014).

Good Life relies on word-of-mouth recommendations which result from their consistently good food, repeat clients, and social media for their marketing and business success. Twitter, Instagram and Facebook are all used. Social media features not only the expected enticing pictures of dishes and wines, but also references to the producers who provide the fresh, local and organic ingredients that Good Life uses in its pizzas and other dishes. The Greenrods have worked hard to build networks and relationships with local producers to source the best products and one can see a mutual support system evident.

Good Life has been awarded a number of awards and accolades including Gourmet Traveller’s Best of the Best Awards in 2006 and 2007; recognition for “top pizza in Australia” by Virgin Blue Voyeur Inflight Magazine in 2004; and voted Best Pizza Restaurant by Restaurant and Catering Australia in 2005, 2007 and 2010 (Tope, 2013).

The accolades also come in from food bloggers and commentators on sites like Trip Advisor, Yelp and Urbanspoon. One person stated, “There are lots of fantastic and authentic pizza offerings in Adelaide but Good Life is pure goodness! The quality of these pizzas are fresh and creative and guilt free!” (comment on Trip Advisor 12 March 2014 Trip Advisor, 2014). Another appeared to be a devoted customer, stating, “Having dined at their Hutt Street and Jetty Road restaurants, decided to give their new’ish North Adelaide one a go and wasn’t disappointed. Wonderful organic produce cooked to perfection. Great wine-list too – just love this place. Highly recommended” (comment on Urbanspoon 28 October 2009 Urbanspoon, 2009).
References


Locavore: Home of the “100 mile diet” in Adelaide

*Saving the planet one meal at a time. (Locavore, 2015)*

Locavore is an award-winning wine and tapas bar located in Stirling, in the Adelaide Hills. The term locavore refers to someone committed to eating foods procured within a range of 100 miles (160 kilometres). It was inspired by the 100 mile diet which was derived by the example of Alisa Smith and Bill MacKinnon who decided to trial living for a year only on sustenance sourced from within 100 miles of their Vancouver home; their inspiration was the craziness of a globalised food industry which, for example, saw a startling increase in food miles (see Smith & MacKinnon, 2007). It is harder for a restaurant to be purist on this philosophy than individuals, because, for instance, it would prohibit inclusion of coffee on the menu in countries such as Australia and this would be difficult to sustain as a viable commercial restaurant.

Owner Chris March noted his Locavore restaurant was “Locavore before it was a word in Australia” (pers. comm. 15-January 2015). On Postcards SA he explained, “When we discovered the locavore concept we worked out there was no-one in Australia doing it. So we sat down and drew our circle on the map and astounded ourselves at what you can get within that 100 mile radius” (Postcards SA, 2009). Because being a 100% commercially viable locavore restaurant is not possible, Locavore’s procurement strategy is: “Wherever possible everything we serve is grown or produced within a 100 mile radius. If not local, family farmed; if not family farmed, organic; if not organic, fair trade” (Locavore, 2015). Locavore’s website explains the locavore focus:

A recent Australian survey by Choice Magazine found that the average basket of food has traveled up to 70,000 kms, or 3 times around the world! So if a locavore basket only travels 1000km, and we serve four baskets a day, then we save 100 000 000 km a year! (Locavore, 2015).

While Chris emphasised the locavore ethos of his establishment, he also acknowledged it was frightening to a lot of individuals and restaurants to consider a commitment to a 100%
locavore life. His philosophy was that a key to the concept was making people more aware of the origins of their food.

One of the keys to Locavore’s practice is to look for alternatives to ingredients and products which cannot be sourced within the 100 mile range; Chef Freddie Monaghan stated, “You might think of really nice ideas you want to do and then realise that that product is not available within the 100 mile circle. So you go and you look for a product. That’s half the fun of this – finding what you’re looking for” (Postcards SA, 2009).

Locavore has been recognised within the industry, winning the prestigious SA Great regional tourism awards for “Restaurant and catering services” and finalists for the Restaurant and Catering Association “Best new restaurant”.

The Locavore is not a preachy kind of a restaurant, but nor does it hide its ethos either. When visiting the restaurant’s website, the philosophy of locavore is made clear and the menu clearly features the outstanding produce and wines of the Adelaide Hills and the surrounding region in South Australia. Additionally, the restaurant has the locavore stamps on the paper tablecloths which feature the restaurant’s motto, a blackboard promoting the fresh, seasonal and rich nature of the region’s produce which is highlighted in the restaurant, and, of course, the local staff are ready to tell you all about the local gems that feature on the wine list and the menu. Of course such a commercial restaurant in a highly competitive region such as the Adelaide Hills cannot claim 100% of its menu as locavore compliant, but the majority is; thought is given to local substitutes for restaurant mainstays that are not local to the region and wait staff are prepared to explain to customers the restaurant’s commitments.

Online reviews and blogs indicate that Locavore’s customers are supportive of the locavorian ethos. After reviewing the menu highlights he experienced, one online reviewer stated, “This is your home away from home... not to mention the concept behind The Locavore and how food is sourced. It’s an amazing, gratifying dining style you need to experience, learn about and adopt it at home” (Yelp, n.d.). Another stated, “I’m definitely a big fan of the meaning behind the name and what it stands for; wine, food, beers, ciders all sourced inside a 100 mile radius of the restaurant” (Yelp, n.d.).

Chris serves as the Chair of the Stirling Business Association and as a result plays a significant role in community leadership to develop the prosperity and attractiveness of Stirling as an Adelaide Hills destination. Chris’ philosophy as Chair has been, “If you can build a more cohesive community, in return you’re going to get more successful businesses” (pers. comm. 15 January 2015).
Chris made it clear that we were interviewing him at a moment when he was envisioning a new approach – maybe a seven-year itch to innovate. A look at the Locavore website today shows the new vision – locaburgers, a redesigned wine bar and a theme of “agricultural hipster with recycling” (Locavore, 2015). But Chris also shared a bigger vision with us in our interview: a series of locavore restaurants throughout South Australia and Australia, offering a possibility of doing a whole tour of Australia sustained by locavore restaurants and cafés.

References
The Co-op Coffee Shop: Democracy at work in the café space

A worker co-operative with the purpose of creating stable ethical jobs for those who are actively trying to create a better world. Ethically sourced coffee and tea, and a combination of vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, organic and locally sourced food for lunch or a quick snack. (Adelaide Vegans, 2015)

The Co-operative Coffee Shop, or Co-op Coffee Shop for short, was established in mid-2014 after two years of planning and organising by people with a vision for creating a worker-owned and controlled café in the Adelaide CBD. It is located on Currie Street across from a large TAFE campus and in a building shared with Co-West and Mad Mouse Alley, which offer community spaces for writers, artists and social groups. The Co-op Coffee Shop began with the energy and commitment of ten cooperative members who were determined to create a positive work environment for themselves and to offer a model of a cooperative café which would demonstrate how things could be done differently.

They additionally sought capital for the project from the crowd-sourcing site Pozible, which secured more than $11,000 for the project. In this campaign, the Co-op expressed their vision:

We will create a “third space”: a place where people come to meet, relax, share ideas and socialise outside of the home and workplace. Adelaide cries out for a space where local community groups and progressive groups in general can organise and hold events, and as well as this, the space will be accessible to the general public - especially you! Your contributions will allow you to join us in creating this concept for all. (Co-op Coffee Shop, 2013)

Functioning as a workers cooperative is a very different model of operation for a café and so the process of establishing the co-op was done with care and patience. As Sam Shelter explained in an interview:

When you do something as a collective you need to make sure all your members can work together. So we spent the last year organising, meeting weekly, to ensure that we’re all on the same page and that we have the same values, that we have the appropriate skills to set up a coffee shop and so on. (Heckler, 2013)
The features of the workers cooperative model include the fact that workers are their own bosses and they create their own workplace environment, decisions are made by consensus, and workers create a fair and equitable working environment featuring fair and adequate pay and conditions. Since its inception, the Co-op Coffee Shop has committed to fulfilling the seven values of cooperatives, including openness, democratic practices, supporting other cooperatives and concern for their communities (see http://ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles).

Because workers cooperatives are still very few in number, cooperatives such as the Co-op Coffee Shop take their responsibility to help other cooperatives to form and thrive very seriously. In fact members of the Co-op Coffee Shop consulted with a workers’ cooperative in Hobart before opening in 2014, and now they’re able to share information with others. For instance on their Facebook page, the Co-op Coffee Shop has posted links to advice and manuals on initiating cooperatives (Facebook, n.d.-a). Such advice and networks can be very useful in navigating both the regulatory framework for cooperatives (such as complying with the requirements of the Cooperatives Act 1997 which is the current legislation governing cooperatives and their practices) as well as the more complex human interactions that need to be managed with the non-hierarchical cooperative approach.

In his interview with us, co-op member Ian Law explained that these cooperative values build benefits for not only the workers but also their communities. Ian said:

*I think another thing about cooperatives is they provide that opportunity to create a small community and then build on it and in an environment where we have what I consider governments that have been fairly hostile to individuals creating that sense of community ... this is one way of cutting out a bit of that harshness and providing a sense of connection and building up community that can make the ill effects that come from there perhaps less than what they might otherwise be. (Ian Law pers. comm. 1 August 2014)*
While forming the workers’ cooperative model was the key focus of the enterprise initially, there are two other pillars for the Co-op Coffee Shop: ethics and sustainability. As the Co-op members articulated in their values statement on their Pozible crowd-sourcing campaign, they are committed to serving quality coffee that is sourced from the direct trade arrangements with communities in the Asia-Pacific region; serving vegetarian food, made with organic, free range, and local ingredients as much as possible; and rating all ingredients for their holistic ethical standards (Co-op Coffee Shop on Pozible, 2013).

Greens Member of the South Australian Legislative Council Tammy Franks noted the establishment of the Co-op Coffee Shop in 2014 and commended it as a model for South Australia:

*The reason I am mentioning the Co-Op Coffee Shop today is that I want to highlight this business model. Running a co-op business in Adelaide, and especially in the CBD, is actually quite a rarity, and registering the business has been a challenge. However, this business model is great at achieving a fair and democratic workplace and it is very empowering for workers.*

*The model works on the assumption that workers value a more humanised workplace where all input can improve the business. That might be a rarity in Adelaide but they are a well established business type around the world. In fact, according to the International Cooperative Alliance, Co-op’s provide 100 million jobs worldwide; that is 20 per cent more than multinational
enterprises. If one were to combine the economic activity of the 300 largest cooperatives in the world, that economic activity would equate to the tenth largest national economy. Thus you can see that cooperatives are providing an excellent opportunity here for Adelaide workers and businesses.

The Co-Op Coffee Shop is aiming to set a precedent so that future co-ops will be easier to set up in Adelaide and, indeed, South Australia. I encourage members to take a look at this exciting new enterprise (Franks, 2014).

Managing to present a new model of café enterprise is not an easy task and the Co-op Coffee Shop members emphasise the experimental nature of their efforts:

I’m not going to say we’re doing this as perfectly or as well as we could, it’s something that we’re building on day by day and dealing with the challenges as they come. But what we’ve got is that power of the experience and the knowledge of all the people in the group that you can try to draw on and try to build up, look at building skills so that… so that’s the power of the model, getting there and making it work is the challenge. (Ian Law pers. comm. 1 August 2014)

The co-op members’ hard work is paying off as the café has built a steady and loyal client base. Feedback posted on the café’s Facebook page shows appreciation for its service, food and ethics; one customer gave it a five star rating and stated, “good coffee, good atmosphere, worker-owned and operated 10/10 would visit again” (Facebook, n.d.-b)

References
Nove on Luce: Building community on Light Square

Together changing the world one coffee at a time. (Nove on Luce brochure)

Nove on Luce is a new social enterprise that runs on a not-for-profit basis using the café space to offer solutions to youth unemployment, address family disintegration, help integrate international students and other migrants into the community, and foster social cohesion through social interaction. It issues a challenge in its café pamphlet: “Startup training initiatives for those who are ready to break the cycle of poverty and apathy in our community”.

It started out with funding from the Coastlands Church who wanted to offer support for community service and engagement. It also received inspiration from other leading social enterprise café, particularly STREAT (STREAT, 2015) in Melbourne. The first feature of sustainability is the use of a heritage building well placed on Light Square in the Adelaide CBD.

It opened in mid-2014, built on the efforts and commitment of four professionals, all unpaid, including a manager, a barista and a chef. They started small “...with opening hours from 7am until 10am in the mornings just serving coffee and brownies” (Annette Simmons, pers. comm 13 February 2015).

Working with a team of unpaid volunteers (numbering seven today), the café provides a safe training space in hospitality for disadvantaged young people and others seeking reintegration with the community and a chance to build networks in the safe environment of this welcoming café space. In the interview with manager Annette Simmons, she emphasised the focus on building community, integrating the café in its community, and
giving this community involvement and “ownership” of the café space and its use. It is clear that the religious origins of the café have carried over into a “mission” of service, which makes it stand out from other cafés in the city. It also seems the café has been influenced by its location as it is positioned along one of the four main squares of Adelaide which is characterised by being in proximity to a university, a TAFE campus, an arts precinct and the rather more edgy community that is associated with Hindley Street (a spot in Adelaide known for its bars, clubs and strip joints).

With such a focus on serving and building the community, it stands to logic that at this point the café’s client base is strongly built on committed, repeat customers. As Annette Simmons noted, “They come back because of what we’re about, and they feel that they’re doing a good thing. It’s a feel good thing for everybody” (pers. comm 13 February 2015). Clientele include the students studying at the nearby TAFE campus and university, local office workers and the tourists accommodated in nearby hotels and backpackers.

The café features strong environmental and social sustainability aspects. In terms of environmental sustainability, the first thing one notices when visiting Nove on Luce is the beautiful heritage building in which it is located (leased from the university). Its fit-out includes pre-loved furniture and café equipment. It uses the techniques of a menu blackboard, recycled cardboard signage, biocups and paper bags for takeaway foods as means for fewer negative environmental impacts. Another key feature is the menu: coffee is purchased from a company engaging in direct trade so profits go directly to producing communities, and the food is local, healthy and affordable, and is often organic. The affordability aspect of the menu is a key aspect of social sustainability to ensure the student market and the poorer residents in the community can afford to buy healthy and nutritious food. Finally, the most outstanding feature of the business is its nature as a social enterprise with a focus on providing hospitality training and experience to trainees who need this. However, in terms of economic sustainability, it is important to note that Nove on Luce is not motivated by profits and volunteerism features in its ethos as all are unpaid. However, it currently operates on its own funds and has not relied on any further inputs from the church or any others so far.

Poem for Nove on Luce. (photo F. Higgins-Desbiolles)
Food blogs indicate that this young initiative is having an impact on ethical dining choices in Adelaide; one stated, “this is a café of both excellence and it's a non-profit café serving the community. A gem!” (Hagger, 2015).

References

Etica: Ethical pizzeria and mozzarella bar in Adelaide

We have sourced what we regard as the most ethically available food in Australia. (Etica, 2015)

Etica is a truly unique pizzeria restaurant based on a dual ethos that underpins its efforts. It was created by Federico and Melissa Pisanelli as a result of their concern to foster greater consumer awareness and engagement with animal welfare ethics, and a desire to honour the Neapolitan food traditions of their heritage. In terms of the former, Federico Pisanelli states the aim of Etica is, “To promote animal welfare ... we do that by considering all animal derived products and making sure that they come from farms that practice the highest animal welfare standards” (pers. comm. 27 February 2015). In terms of the latter, the Etica website states, “We are not just producing pizza, we are creating la pizza Napoletana. We create our pizza by the same methods pizzaioli in Naples have been using since the nineteenth century” (Etica, 2015). These two commitments are woven together in the vision of Etica to create a truly unique business: “As adults, we want to create the same meals we ate growing up, share the culture we celebrate, and promote the importance of animal welfare” (Etica, 2015).

While this may seem a strange mix of aims, in fact the vision of the Pisanellis links back to the time before we became disconnected from our food sources. These days, “nonno” and Uncle Steve provide some of the ingredients listed on the Etica website from their own gardens.

This couple have studied animal law and are very interested in how animals are treated in Australia. In the decision to open a pizzeria, they were concerned about promoting the cause of animal welfare and to raise consumer awareness of issues in the production of animal derived products (pers. comm. Federico Pisanelli 27 February 2015). On their website, they provide a brief outline of the issue of animal welfare ethics in our modern factory farming system and state, “We want to help consumers understand where our food
comes from” and also “we want to influence other restaurants in subscribing to the importance of animal welfare” (Etica, 2015).

The commitment to animal ethics and welfare runs deep in the lives and work of this couple. The Facebook page contains a number of links to information on animal welfare issues of the day such as eggs derived from caged hens and the live cattle trade. While running Etica, Federico Pisanelli has served on the Animal Law committee at the Law Society of South Australia. Additionally, as part of their vision of giving through the business, they annually support meat-free week and use that as an opportunity to raise funds for relevant animal welfare agencies.

The commitment to using the restaurant as a tool for awareness raising and education is evident in the work of the Pisanellis. As the Etica website states, “We want to help consumers understand where our food comes from” (Etica, 2015). These restaurateurs use the website, the menu, the conversations with their customers and their social media interface to raise issues of concern with the modern factory farming system, issues of animal welfare and ethics in terms of our consumption choices, and the offering of food which is served with an assurance of respect for animal welfare in all facets of provisioning.

The pizza oven located in the centre of Etica: Source of authentic cuisine and heating. (Photo F. Higgins-Desbiolles)

This unique set of commitments to animal welfare and authentic Neapolitan pizza and mozzarella seems to have generated a loyal customer base that the business can rely on rather than having to engage in complex and expensive marketing initiatives. As co-owner
Melissa Pisanelli emphasised in the interview for this research, the key to their business is established relationships, and the use of social media in a more personal way seems to enhance customer loyalty. A foodie blogger demonstrated the way in which some customers valued the ethical focus of Etica:

The name already appealed to me before my first visit – translates to ‘ethical’...here is an extract from their website to explain further, “our priority in searching for ingredients, particularly animal products, is the ethical treatment of the animals concerned. We have sourced what we regard as the most ethically available food in Australia.” This includes fighting against factory farming and raising awareness of ethical and sustainable practices. Some may say these are just cliché buzz words at the moment, but I for one am more than happy to jump on the bandwagon and make more conscious decisions about the restaurants I support. First tick before stepping in the door. (The Chopping Board, 2012)

This blogger’s comments also provide some insights into the way Etica builds this relationship and bonds people to their business:

The young lady who has now looked after me four times was brilliant and a breath of fresh air. As a result of my continued support for the restaurant this particular staff member offered a glass of wine as well as arrancini balls (on two separate visits) free of charge. This was not in response to anything they did wrong, but was purely to reward loyalty, which is rare. In addition, she was always willing to explain parts of the menu and served with a genuine smile on her face. (The Chopping Board, 2012)

Having this ethical focus and not following a mainstream advertising route, Etica has defied conventional wisdom and created a unique niche for itself, with a dedicated band of followers which have recently helped it to celebrate its third anniversary.

References
Experience Café: Eradicating social and spiritual loneliness in Adelaide

*If you see the good in people it’s amazing the change it makes.* (Reverend Ruthmary Bond pers. comm. 6 February 2015)

Experience Café opened in late 2013 on the east side of Adelaide’s CBD. It is a not-for-profit, Christian café with a focus on helping new migrants, refugees and students obtain vital local work experience, English language skills and preparation for the “real working world” (Experience Café, 2015).

Reverend Ruthmary Bond has been the catalyst to this visionary use of the café to engage people who otherwise might feel isolated, allow diverse people to interact together in a café environment and thereby to build community. She identified the need for such a space from working with a youth spirituality group who talked about a feeling of alienation and the inability to secure employment. Additionally, because Ruthmary works at the state office for the Uniting Church in a program entitled Fresh Expressions of Church, she has innovatively developed this concept of Experience Café bringing the church into the marketplace in an effort to foster holistic thriving.

Evidence is clear that since its establishment in 2013, Café Experience is achieving its goals. In a video made about Experience Café, Julio states, “After a few months of working here, I was able to get some jobs. I think it helps you build your confidence, because...the fact you feel accepted and supported... sometimes it is the push that you need to be able to ...keep looking for work... and trying to build your life” (Julio in Video Regenerating the Church, 2015). Quantitatively, Ruthmary estimated at the time of our interview that 170 people had had an opportunity to work at Experience Café, and of the 100 engaged in 2014, 70 of those had found employment as a result of their hospitality experience obtained at Experience Café.
The café has become a community incorporating people of diverse backgrounds, cultures and experiences and most importantly faiths; while Café Experience was established by the City Soul Mission of the Uniting Church, people of all faiths are welcomed for training, as customers and as the café’s community. However, to ensure an inclusive and positive space for all, Experience Café has a code of conduct to promote understanding and harmony. The Code of Experience Café reads: “We exist to eradicate social & spiritual loneliness, we are loving, we are respectful, we are eclectic, no perfect people allowed”.

This code points to a spirituality behind the café which is one of its key facets of sustainability. As Ruthmary explained in our interview, while at one level the pragmatic focus of the café is to provide experience and training in hospitality so that its clients can secure employment, at a deeper level, the purpose of the café is far greater than this. Ruthmary explained:

The vision for us – we decided that we didn’t want to just be a social organisation that helped people get jobs – we needed to be more than that and one of the things that we feel is, at this time in our history, people are very lonely. Young people have left home or they’re on their own at university or in new places, or those who come to Australia [as refugees and migrants]. Loneliness is really rife; this is one of the issues of our culture at the moment. We don’t do things a lot in community so for us our vision is we exist to eradicate social and spiritual loneliness. (pers. comm 6 February 2015)

Ruthmary’s background and experiences are a factor in the emphasis she places on building relationships. For Experience Café, these relationships are at multiple levels and are the foundations for the efficacy of meeting the organisational goals. Firstly, there are the relationships built with and between the clients of Experience Café, which is the term used for the volunteers and trainees who secure hospitality experience through the café. Next is the relationships built with the non-government organisations who serve as the conduit for
some of these clients that the café serves. In terms of refugees and asylum seekers, Experience Café has worked with organisations such as Red Cross and Bridge Builders to reach potential clients from this demographic. The Royal Society for the Blind has worked to place vision impaired clients in the café, and the nearby Hospitality and Tourism Schools and universities have secured training opportunities for their students. Next are the relationships built with the suppliers to Experience Café who have been very generous in their support of the café and its mission. Ruthmary noted how much she values the relationships with suppliers and other businesses:

*It is about relationships – we believe very strongly if we prosper, everyone prospers; so we don’t want it to be only us making money. If we make money others make money and so it’s a snowball effect. That way everybody becomes sustainable in that loop, so we have a contract with Perryman’s pies which is a local bakery as well as Nippy’s juice company. That way if we’re supporting them, that keeps them in business which then keeps us in business.* (Ruthmary Bond pers. comm. 6 February 2015)

Finally there are of course the café’s customers who come from the surrounding offices, the tourism market and the residents of Adelaide’s CBD who enjoy supporting such a social enterprise and enjoy the community created by this welcoming and inclusive café. What then occurs is a special bond – Experience Café weaves these different relationships between all of these diverse stakeholders and in so doing helps to create a transformed community with values of acceptance and inclusivity. To provide an example of that, Ruthmary noted that her suppliers were influenced by the example of Experience Café to think about their hiring practices and values of corporate sustainability. Additionally, Ruthmary explained that at a time when media is fomenting some negativity about youth, she noted Experience Café has changed the community’s minds about young people; rather than being the lazy and uncaring youth of media reports, the café’s young volunteers demonstrate they are keen and involved in their community.

The feedback lodged online at sites such as Urbanspoon, Trip Advisor and Yelp indicates that the attempt to offer good and affordable food in a welcoming atmosphere is successful. For instance, one customer posted:

*Went to Experience Café today for the first time. Loved the food we had and the great selection on the menu. Great set up for kids with a heap of toys out the back. Nothing was too much trouble for Nadine and the team. Even the dog was served a bowl of fresh water and some doggie treats. Would definitely recommend it for a relaxed atmosphere and awesome menu.* (comment posted on Urbanspoon, 2013)
Finally, from our interview with Ruthmary we learned she isn’t content with stopping at the success achieved so far and she has a much bigger vision. Ruthmary has documented her work on building Experience Café as a social enterprise and conducted rigorous evaluations since its establishment. She is currently working on offering this as a franchise model to others who can emulate Experience Café and establish more such enterprises in the Adelaide region and interstate, starting in Melbourne.

The exterior of Experience Café on Hutt Street, eastern side of Adelaide’s CBD. (Photo F. Higgins-Desbiolles).

References
Goolwa, South Australia

*Relax, Reinvigorate & Refresh...* (Alexandrina Council (2013))

Located on the Fleurieu Peninsula of South Australia, the small regional town of Goolwa is a historic river port on the River Murray some 100km south of Adelaide. The town and surrounds are home to more than 10,000 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011), many of whom have moved there from metropolitan areas such as Adelaide to enjoy a “sea change” or improved lifestyle on the coast. The town is considered somewhat of a “tourist mecca where boats carry tourists and the historical buildings have been restored as art galleries, cafés and B&Bs” (Alexandrina Council, 2013). Local produce is widely used at cafés and restaurants and can be purchased throughout the region, and in March 2007, the township itself became the first formally recognised Cittaslow city (or ‘Slow Town’) outside of Europe.

Key tourism attractions are based around the quality food and wine of the Fleurieu Peninsula, the “river-meets-the-sea” location, and a variety of heritage attractions including the Ngarrindjeri people and the historic Goolwa Wharf precinct which is home to the Steam Ranger Cockle Train heritage railcar and an authentic wood-fired heritage paddle steamer called the PS Oscar W. A range of outdoor activities such as fishing, surfing, boating, canoeing, beachcombing, whale watching, bird watching, cycling and walking are also popular in and immediately around Goolwa.

The township of Goolwa is serviced by some three hotels (pubs) and fourteen cafés and restaurants, with another fourteen eateries located in the nearby townships of Middleton, Port Elliot, Hindmarsh Island and Currency Creek (Alexandrina Council, 2015). The region is particularly well regarded for its cheese, wine and seafood (for example, Coorong mullet, cockles and mulloway), no doubt supported considerably by Goolwa’s status as a Cittaslow.

Cittaslow Goolwa not only promotes the principles of Slow Food but it has established a number of food events and networks beneficial to the local community (Cittaslow Goolwa Incorporated, 2015). The Cittaslow Food and Wine Group comprising local chefs, restaurateurs, produce growers, vintners, wineries, food artisans and diners meet regularly to promote understanding of Slow Food principles and develop cooperative efforts between those involved in the industry. Cittaslow food and beverage businesses adhere to a Code of Ethics which specifies:

1. Respect and promote the Cittaslow philosophy through food and wine businesses in the Goolwa region and beyond.
2. Encourage and promote the importance of sustainable produce, food and wine production techniques and food and wine traditions.
3. Have local identity and relevance.
4. Support and encourage fair prices for customers and suppliers.
5. Educate and encourage our community about food and wine and the Cittaslow philosophy.
6. Educate staff in the Cittaslow philosophy.
7. Promote food diversity, multiculturalism, indigenous tradition and culture.
8. Encourage active debate on current food and wine issues.
9. Focus on the quality of the produce in a way that is consistent with the Cittaslow philosophy rather than solely its method of production.
10. Reflect the community, season and place in which food is being produced.
11. Provide through our businesses a quality experience that will promote the values of Cittaslow.
12. Focus on the quality of produce from a taste, environmental and social perspective.
13. Provide a link between sensory perceptions and culture.
14. Be based on foods produced humanely and respectful of environmental considerations.
15. Provide a unique taste experience.
16. Encourage the warmth of human spirit using food and wine as a forum.
17. Encourage diversity and respect in the workplace.
18. Ensure that fresh produce is affordable to the community.

It can be seen that one of the advantages for sustainable cafés and restaurants in Goolwa is that Cittaslow strongly promotes the principles of Slow Food which align in a number of ways to the principles of sustainability. There are also a wide range of benefits for the local community that are enhanced not only through the recognition of Goolwa as a Cittaslow but importantly from the support given back to Cittaslow by the individual cafés and restaurants themselves. Businesses work together with the community, with the Cittaslow Incorporation, and with local authorities towards a more sustainable future for Goolwa and a high quality of life for its residents.

Other examples of how some sustainable cafés and restaurants contribute to a unique sense of place for Goolwa include:

- supporting local farmers and promoting environmentally responsible farming techniques
- participating in the Annual Cittaslow Goolwa Smoke Off (a challenge of preparing and cooking hams and other dishes by kettle barbeque) strengthening community ties and fun
- participating in the Cittaslow Degustation Dinner supporting local producers and Slow Food principles
fundraising with the Cittaslow Food and Wine Group to support sustainable food initiatives as well as community groups such as the Country Fire Service

until it ceased in 2014, participation in the Goolwa Alive Street Festival showcasing local talent and businesses

general contribution to the local food scene – adding value to the Fleurieu food and wine reputation – but making a name for Goolwa in its own right for its involvement in Slow Food and serving fresh local produce.

References
The Australasian Circa 1858: The aesthetics of sustainability

The Australasian is a welcoming aesthetic haven on South Australia’s Fleurieu Peninsula where international, national and local clientele are encouraged to feast their senses on fine South Australian food, wine and hospitality whilst revitalising their body and soul within an exceptional and health-conscious establishment. (The Australasian, n.d.)

The Australasian Circa 1858 is an award-winning luxury hotel in the holiday town of Goolwa. It stands out from our other case studies as it is firstly a luxury accommodation and its restaurant is only open to non-resident guests on Saturday evenings. However, it was selected as one of our cases because the owners have been supporters of Cittaslow Goolwa since its inception and also because their restaurant has contributed to the sense of place established in Goolwa. As the vision statement above indicates, co-owners Deb Smalley and Juliet Michell have a commitment to providing their guests with a unique experience which is based on a sense of aesthetics which restores the spirit and soul; that it is well received is evidenced in awards such as the 2012 South Australian (SA) Tourism Award for luxury accommodation, the 2013 SA Tourism Award for hosted accommodation and also placing in these same categories in the national tourism awards of Tourism Australia. This has been re-confirmed by numerous positive online guest reviews which are overwhelmingly in the range of excellent.

Perhaps the first thing that stands out about the Australasian is the revival and renovation of a key heritage listed building in a central location in the holiday town of Goolwa. Co-owner Juliet Michell bought the former pub in 2003 and it took years of hard work and commitment to restore this invaluable heritage asset while creating an aesthetic built around the interpretation of the building’s name – the Australasian. The two co-owners have had to work to build their networks in this tight little community. In fact, Chef Juliet
has come back to family roots as her great, great grandfather lived and worked in Goolwa in the 1860s before eventually becoming Mayor of the town.

In asking each restaurateur about their vision of sustainability, Deb Smalley stated she views it as “a circular flow between things, between businesses and people”; certainly the way that the Australasian has built its networks with clients, suppliers, Cittaslow Goolwa and Goolwa businesses, it embodies this principle in multiple ways.

As Juliet Michell noted, “we have a set menu that changes each month and in that way we feel it’s sustainable because we’re reducing waste by not having a la carte situation” (pers. comm. 17 December 2014). While offering cutting edge, Asian inspired dishes, Juliet’s set menu features ingredients obtained from local suppliers and thus the local economy is nurtured by the business. This local, seasonal menu features sustainability in terms of ecological footprint, supporting the local/regional economy, providing healthy food to customers and reduced food waste.

Other sustainability features of the Australasian include use of solar heating for water, recycling, composting and making use of eco-friendly lighting. The Australasian has a philanthropy plan which features giving to local causes. One activity is opening up the heritage listed building to the public, with the proceeds from twice-yearly history tours going to support community groups.

A key feature of the sustainability contributions of the Australasian is the nurturing and care it delivers to its clients. The hotel is designed to be a safe haven and a place to restore, the menu is meant to delight and nurture, and the possible range of experiences one can undertake while staying at the hotel allow for activities like biking and kayaking and enjoying the abundant nature on offer.

The Australasian’s mission statement firmly establishes their philosophy:

- ensure warmth, kindness, empathy and integrity is shown to all guests
- provide guests with a clean, safe and beautiful environment
- support local industry-related businesses (food, wine, tourism)
- support and promote the Cittaslow philosophy
- actively reduce our environmental footprint with sound sustainability practices
- foodie package encourages patrons to slow down which is compliant with the Cittaslow philosophy of slowing down to enjoy a place.
This mission is part of the code of ethics of employment. Employees are locals of Goolwa and the commitment to Cittaslow and its principles permeate the relationships. The Australasian’s Facebook page promotes other Goolwa and Cittaslow Goolwa businesses, for example Bombora at the Beach, as well as suppliers, such as Beach Organics. The co-owners have supported the Cittaslow Goolwa initiative and are part of the fabric of the business community of Goolwa, creating a vibrant community that is supportive of each other and helps this holiday town create a welcoming environment where all can thrive.

This comment posted on Trip Advisor in 2013 is indicative of how this special restaurant has developed a loyal following in the Fleurieu region:

_The service and food provided in this establishment is without peer. If at first you are put off by the limited choice offered in the fixed menu, think again. I firmly believe that cooking a fixed menu for a large number of people allows the Chef to properly demonstrate their craft without the 'scramble' of attending to preferences. My family use the hotel on special occasions and we hope to continue to do so for many years to come. The price for the fixed Saturday night menu of $75 pp may seem steep but what excellent value!_ (TripAdvisor, 2013)

The aesthetic design of the dining room showing a creative blending of Australian heritage building with an Asian inspired interior design. (Photo F. Higgins-Desbioles).

**References**

Motherduck restaurant in Goolwa: Commitment to nutritious food

We at Motherduck believe that good food and wine comes from a good place, which is why we forage for only the freshest local produce and cook with what’s in season. So please tuck in and taste the love! (Facebook, 2015)

Motherduck in Goolwa, South Australia is focused on providing good, healthy, local food and nutritional insights to customers. Motherduck is located in the main street of this small tourist town, bringing a point of difference to a street otherwise filled with takeaway vendors and fish and chip shops. Melissa Howard recently (July 2014) opened her health focused restaurant named “Motherduck”. The name comes from her children’s reference to her as a mother duck. The caring and nurturing aspect implied in this name is reflected in her passion for feeding people with food that is good for their health. This quaint little restaurant is located in the hub of the Goolwa main precinct and is an eye catching sight, especially when its colourful elephant grass handmade baskets are on display outside the restaurant. In this small seaside town of Goolwa, where takeaway outlets dominate, Melissa wanted to create a point of difference, by offering “healthy nutritious good food” cooked from the heart “with love”, whilst also caring for the environment as well as the people who grow the food. Although, Motherduck is not a member of Cittaslow, its food philosophy aligns closely with Cittaslow’s vision, as the restaurateur strives to offer organic, unprocessed, and locally sourced food that is carefully cooked to maximise its health benefits and taste.

This research project explored the life story of the restaurateur in order to identify what catalysts might have sparked their unique vision. For Melissa her career as a chef led her to identify a niche market for healthy food, as restaurants until recently did not cater well for
different dietary requirements and health conscious customers. Melissa states that the idea for her restaurant also came from her personal preference when dining out to finding a restaurant that offers tasty healthy food in a good atmosphere. The restaurant caters for various dietary requirements that include wheat, gluten and dairy free food, as well as organic, protein rich, vegetarian, low fat and low GI.

A key aim of Melissa’s restaurant is to offer quality healthy food at a reasonable price, whilst caring for the health of customers, sustainability aspects of the environment and Fair Trade. The restaurant offers an eclectic mixture of food that uses healthy ingredients, such as coconut products (sugar, oil, nectar, flour) as they have medicinal properties, organic wines, unprocessed raw chocolate (for example, Pleasures hot chocolate and chai which are all organic, raw vegan Ferrero Rocher), and fresh juices made with a fusion of varied fruits and vegetables. Melissa is also mindful of using Fair Trade products such as the Loving Earth brand. They purchase coffees which are “single origin” – coffee grown within a single farm, so that the farmer benefits directly from the proceeds of the sale. These products are grown, harvested and produced in environmentally sustainable ways using non-chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides, and custom-made compost that meets the specific nutrient needs of the plants. Fresh, healthy, organic produce is also sourced on a daily basis from suppliers, and homegrown and cooked unprocessed foods are used for the menu. The “eat local” sign displayed outside the restaurant advertises locally sourced Fleurieu Peninsula produce.

This project seeks to understand how restaurants and cafés might teach sustainability in some form to their stakeholders. With Motherduck, the whole enterprise is based on this notion of pedagogy through modelling alternatives, by not just providing equitable access to food for different dietary requirements, but also using food as a tool for critical and civic engagement on alternative sustainable lifestyles. Melissa is an advocate of educating customers on what they are consuming and its health benefits and says that her efforts are appreciated by customers; “On my menu I have exactly what foods and why they’re good for you and what you’re eating and what they’re doing to benefit you ... 99% of the people love the fact that I’ve put there what health benefits there are for them and the food that they eat because a lot of them don’t understand” (per. comm. October 2014). She also states that in order to reduce landfill she uses bamboo and metal straws instead of plastic straws and is also intending to discourage takeaway cups and instead encourage customers to bring their own re-usable “keep cup” or purchase one from Motherduck. She also
advertises their coffee as single origin coffee, and although at first it takes a while for customers to get used to the coffee, overall it has been a successful venture. Melissa is finding that this educative process is also proving to be an economically sustainable business practice, as customers are willing to pay the price for good healthy food and environmentally sustainable practice. This study sought to find out whether “affordable sustainability” is achievable without additional cost to customers. The above demonstrates that this restaurant has been able to provide good healthy food at fairly affordable prices, and even if the customers perceive that menu items are relatively high priced, customers are willing to pay extra for the additional benefits.

The restaurant employs friends and family known to Melissa and this creates a sense of community within the restaurant and perhaps the reviews on social media that the staff were “vibrant, friendly welcoming” reflects this collegial environment. Melissa is also involved in community fundraising and special events, such as this year’s stall at the Harvest festival McLaren Vale to raise funds for the McLaren Vale War Memorial Hospital.

One aspect of this study was to find out how the restaurants engaged in advertising and how the marketing practices contributed to place branding and place-making. She says the name of the restaurant in itself has been a good branding strategy for the restaurant, as people connect with the meaning it evokes. Facebook and social media appear to be the main advertising tool. Daily specials and nutritious information about food that is available in the restaurant as well as market health scares and precautions taken in the restaurant are all communicated through these forums.

A review of the social media confirms that the restaurant is a popular venue, and many appreciate the healthy food choices, tasty food, and local food ethos. As one reviewer
states, it is a “hidden gem: a golden egg which has certainly raised the bar in terms of atmosphere and food quality in Goolwa” (TripAdvisor, 2014).

References
Bombora @ Goolwa Beach Café:
Commitment to local produce

Commitment to local and seasonal food to provide a beach culture experience.

Bombora @ Goolwa Beach Café is a seaside café that is a local icon in Goolwa, well known for its seafood and seasonal local produce. Bombora is located right on the beach front with an unrestricted 180°C glorious ocean view at the well-known surfers’ site in Goolwa. The café offers picturesque scenery for diners, to sit and relax on a deck at the back of a kiosk, and listen to the booming surf of Goolwa Beach. The name of the café – Bombora, comes from an indigenous Australian term for large sea waves, formed over submerged offshore reef or rock. (Galaxyguides.com). In Goolwa these giant sized waves though dangerous, makes them attractive to surfers willing to take a risk (Wikipedia, 2014).

Bombora @ at Goolwa Beach Café is built to blend in with its natural surroundings on a slightly elevated wooden deck, with clear blinds rolled up to let the fresh sea breeze flow through in summer and rolled down and warmed with gas heaters in winter. The café brings in the surf culture with its colourful surf art, as well as specials written on an old surfboard of Olaf Hansen, the founder of Bombora who is a surfer at heart (Smith, 2014). In fact, co-owners Olaf Hanson and Head Chef Joel Cousins are both surfers and well known to Goolwa locals. Olaf took over the former Goolwa kiosk three years ago (Bombora@goolwa Beach, 2014) after selling Aquacaf, a small eatery on the river’s edge a short drive away, which he had been operating for approximately 12 years. Bombora was expanded into a popular café where you can choose to eat outside, under cover, or just take away. They also cater for special events, parties, Christmas and work functions. Vanessa Button, who recently joined the
team as a co-owner, is also a qualified chef who bakes Bombora’s cakes and sweets on site.
The café was awarded the Best Seaside Restaurant in South Australia by *The Advertiser* in
2010 (Bombora@goolwa Beach, 2014).

In this project we are interested in finding out the extent to which the Cittaslow member
restaurateurs identify and promote the concept of slow food. Bombora is at the forefront of
the Cittaslow movement having seen it operate successfully in Europe. Olaf believes that
there is an opportunity for Cittaslow to grow further in Goolwa.

Vanessa Button, who represents Bombora in many of the Cittaslow hosted events, states, “I’m not sure
how well it’s [Cittaslow] promoted with our tourist trade really or whether people really notice it or
not. But I guess it’s early days”. They are hopeful that Goolwa’s hosting of the 2017 International Cittaslow
General Assembly will create more awareness and support for this concept among the public. Head Chef
Joel Cousins is a Goolwa born-and-bred culinary king, and he captures Cittaslow’s concept of local
provenance by creating menu items that are seasonal and reference the area. Vanessa Button states that the
café is all about local sustainability – provisioning local and seasonal food and wine, employing local staff,
maintaining relationships with local suppliers and giving back to the local community. She says, “We are as
much as we can be about slow food. We don’t buy processed food or anything like that, we try and make everything that we can” (pers. comm. October 3rd 2014). Olaf and Joel, being long-term local residents as well as surfers, have formed good relationships with local fisherman and are able to gain access to good quality fresh seafood. Olaf states, "I’m really happy that I’ve got some local guys who bring me in the fish, I struggled for years to get
someone to stop at my door. It was easier for them to send it to Adelaide to the markets and then it comes all the way back to me" (Wilkinson, Love, & Mattsson, 2011). Their menu features fresh local seafood such as Snapper, Flathead, Coorong Mullet, Goolwa Mulloway,
and Cockles all caught from South Australian waters. They call their signature dish the
“Goolwa Super Bowl”, a bouillabaisse style tomato-based fish soup with cockles, prawns and local fish (Galaxyguides.com). Bombora is also a member of the Cittaslow food and wine group, comprised of restaurateurs and members of the public who are passionate about food and wine. Vanessa states, “It is all about interacting with the community about food and wine in the area”.

Bombora is well-embedded in the local community and champions many local causes and events. They promote the work of local artists, for example by displaying their art in the café. They cater for and host many local functions, including the local council’s annual Christmas party. They support and get involved in community events. For example, they organise the local smoke-off every year (where you smoke your own ham), and conduct the “How To” sessions. The “How To” sessions are run by guest presenters with a diverse range of backgrounds such as chefs, foodies, wine and food producers, “all united by their love of the Fleurieu Region, it’s produce, markets and people” (The Goolwa Smoke Off, 2014). In December when cockling season opens they collect and cook their own. They donate cakes to the Cancer Council’s Biggest Morning Tea charity event. Bombora also promotes the Fleurieu Peninsula permaculture group. The aim of permaculture is to “create systems that are ecologically-sound and economically viable, which provide for their own needs, do not exploit or pollute, and are therefore sustainable in the long term” (Bill Mollison as cited in Bradtke, 2015). A large poster about the Southern Fleurieu Peninsula permaculture group that provides educative environmental sustainability aspects is displayed at the entrance to the café. Reduction of food waste is part of environmental sustainability, and Bombora addresses this issue in several ways. Vanessa states that the café’s waste is reduced by staff taking home leftover food for compost to grow herbs and edible flowers for use in Bombora’s kitchen. She states that they try to reduce waste in the first place, by keeping to a smaller menu, “so that we’re not buying in a huge variety of things – it’s just [about having] a great chef that knows what he’s ordering and how much of it” (pers. comm. October 3rd 2014).
In our project, we are also interested in how sustainable cafés help create a sense of place and make a place attractive. Bombora is certainly a local icon featured in 90% of seaside tourist advertising brochures, newspapers, Cittaslow news items, and in a variety of other social media, and is also promoted by local businesses and residents. Vanessa states, “we do, we have brilliant clientele and they come back. Holiday makers come back year after year after year and I recognise people from when the business was at the river 10 years ago” (pers. comm. October 3\textsuperscript{rd} 2014). She states that in the off-season, the business is sustained by a loyal local market.

References
Commitment to providing an inclusive local food experience that is of high quality

Open for more than 20 years in this lovely South Australian holiday town situated on the Murray River, Goolwa’s Rankines at The Whistle Stop makes the most of its great location, the charm of the riverside history, and the great local foods it can source from the surrounding region. Run by co-owners Peter and Sue Rankine, this couple has over forty years of experience in the hospitality sector.

Rankines at The Whistle Stop is a member of the food and wine group Cittaslow Goolwa. In his interview with us Peter Rankine emphasised that his restaurant adheres to the code of ethics of Cittaslow Goolwa’s food and wine group (see Cittaslow Goolwa, 2014). Peter stated, “we have stuck to the code of practice fairly well, we offer quality food using as many local ingredients as possible, using local people and we are friendly, it’s not hurried” (pers. comm. 3 October 2014). Relying on repeat customers, the local community and the holiday home owners that characterise Goolwa, the Rankines at The Whistle Stop is renowned for friendly and relaxed customer service; Chef Andrew Burt won a South Australian Small Business Association award for Outstanding Individual in Customer Service in 2015 (posting 10th April 2015 Facebook, 2015). This and other awards as well as online reviews indicate that this restaurant is especially getting principle 11 of the code of ethics for Cittaslow food and wine businesses right; principle 11 states “Provide through our businesses a quality experience that will promote the values of Cittaslow” (Cittaslow Goolwa, 2014). Unlike the takeaways that often feature in such holiday towns, Rankines at The Whistle stop features fresh food and made-to-order meals, so that customers’ food dietary requirements and preferences can be accommodated.

Rankines at The Whistle Stop Café features as much quality local foods and wines as possible and demonstrates the local provenance of the Cittaslow philosophy with its menu and wine list. Local foods feature on the famous “carnivores’ night” and oysters

Whistle Stop Sign. (Photo F. Higgins-Desbiolles)
from the West Coast of South Australia rate frequent mention in online blogging and commentary. The wine list is filled with local and regional South Australian wines and in particular fellow members of the food and wine group of Cittaslow Goolwa, such as Currency Creek and Ballast Stone wines.

The restaurant has been used as a venue for the South Australian Living Artists Association’s events in Goolwa and has supported the work of local artists by allowing them to display their work in the café. Additionally Rankines at The Whistle Stop supports local schools and sporting clubs in their efforts to fundraise by donating vouchers for the restaurant.

The commitment to the providing the best of local produce is clearly appreciated by the restaurant’s clientele as indicated in online reviews. For instance, one commentator on TripAdvisor noted, “Lovely spot for a lovely meal. Beautiful fresh seasonal food, sourced locally...Still run by a local family who have been involved in the industry in Goolwa for many years. Well worth a stop if your [sic] looking for good food along the South Coast” (comment posted on 26 January 2015 TripAdvisor, 2015).
References


Photo of interior of Rankines at The Whistle Stop showing the importance of the Goolwa and River environment in which this business is embedded. (Photo F. Higgins-Desbiolles)
Melbourne, Victoria

Home to more than four million people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014), Melbourne is frequently described as a “melting pot of cultures” (Tourism Victoria, n.d.). Its large migrant population has most certainly contributed to the variety of food on offer with cuisines being served from over 70 countries (Tourism Victoria, n.d.), and eating out being considered part of the city’s culture. It is full of large and small restaurants, bars, cafés and produce stores, many of which are crammed into little laneways or located in city basements or rooftops, and food can be said to play a strong role in Melbourne’s identity which can be described in some ways as “the Paris of the South”. It is certainly a city that revolves around consuming good food:

*It’s a place where house prices are affected by proximity to a produce market, discussions about where to get the best bread can quickly get heated and access to a well constructed wine list is considered something of an inalienable right.* (Melbourne Food and Wine, 2015)

It is also a city with an important source of fresh, local produce on its fringe; with some 40 to 50% of Victoria’s total vegetable production within just 100km of the city, food production on the urban fringe generates over 6000 jobs and is worth $1.3 to 1.6 billion (Food Alliance, n.d.).

It’s a city that promotes the use of backyard and rooftop vegetable gardens and encourages greater waste reduction, re-use and recycling. Indeed, Melbourne plans to become a resource and material-efficient city and the city centre itself aims to become an eco-city attaining zero net emissions in the future (Pillai, 2008).

The City Council has identified a range of steps to achieve this including a focus on energy efficient buildings, sustainable transport modes, geosequestration (pumping the carbon dioxide underground), and changes to food production, processing and consumption patterns. Efforts are currently being directed towards ensuring Docklands’ residents have sustainable food provisions. The Queen Victoria Market – selling local produce, local gourmet foods and imported specialty foods – is fitted with solar panels to demonstrate local clean energy generation. Using new waste solutions, the Melbourne Town Hall produces organic matter for use in local parks and gardens, and the Council is supporting its hospitality precincts to install similar technology. Green roofs, walls and facades are also being trialled throughout the city as part of the Urban Forest Strategy to double tree canopy cover by 2040 (City of Melbourne, n.d.). Additionally, Melbourne is also the home of the Sustainable Living Festival (SLF), which is held as an annual event. Offered in Melbourne since 2001, “The Sustainable Living Festival is a manifestation of a commitment to healing our environment, a demonstration of diverse approaches for reducing the damaging impact
we are having on the planet” (Sustainable Living Festival, n.d.). All of these actions help demonstrate the philosophy that every person and every business can contribute to these efforts, creating an appropriate place for sustainable cafés and restaurants to join the journey in Melbourne.

Examples of ways that these cafés and restaurants help contribute to Melbourne as a sustainable city and the associated sense of place include:

- strengthening the image of Melbourne as an environmentally-conscious city and offering a forum that supports local government authorities in their efforts to promote Melbourne as a sustainable city
- offering locals and visitors the opportunity to participate in sustainability activity in the food industry to complement the city’s sustainable buildings and transport options
- supporting food production on the outskirts of Melbourne by sourcing locally and promoting local fresh foods
- refocussing attention on social sustainability and opportunities for disadvantaged groups (such as youth and Indigenous) to help grow understanding and acceptance of all community members in a diverse, multicultural city
- helping create a vibrant atmosphere (for example, supporting live music) in a “living city” and the associated benefits of an increased feeling of community and of safety (especially after dark)
- providing a space for artistic and creative expression that contributes to Melbourne’s artistic scene (supporting and encouraging local artists and musicians)
- providing a space for spiritual expression and acceptance of a diverse multicultural community
- helping educate a large population base through other initiatives such as cooking classes using local produce, working with schools to grow their own gardens, and involvement with various community events to build a sense of pride for living in Melbourne
- contributing to Melbourne’s eclectic dining scene by providing innovation, choice for diners, and quite often affordable pricing policies to ensure they are accessible to all.

In such a dynamic city, the novelty provided by unique and inspiring sustainable eateries help Melbourne thrive as a tourist destination as well as an attractive place to live. There are also a number of streets with clusters of cafés and restaurants offering similar cuisines such as Brunswick Street, Fitzroy (popular for vegetarian and vegan eateries), Lygon Street, Inner North Melbourne (Italian food) and Acland Street, St Kilda (with its cake shops and bakeries first brought to the area by the Jewish community). Such food options contribute to the character of Melbourne and play an important role in the preservation of food heritage (for example, in the case of Italian migrants and the Jewish community) and supporting diverse populations.

Arguably, Melbourne is the most cosmopolitan city of Australia and its food scene is among the best in the world. With its strong commitment to sustainability, best practice in urban
redevelopment and food cultures, it plays host to some of the most exciting and innovative leaders in the sustainable restaurant scene.

**References**


Lentil as Anything, Melbourne and Sydney: Believing in “the power of humanity to create stupendous change”

Provision of wholesome and nutritious meals where money is not a concern that is centered on mutual trust, generosity, and respect. (Lentil as Anything, 2015a)

Lentil as Anything is a “pay what you can”, not-for-profit chain of popular vegetarian restaurants. The unique character of this restaurant chain is that whilst the menu contains no set prices, an unlimited choice of eight buffet trays containing premium organic food, hot beverages, and dessert, and a-la-carte breakfasts are all served on a donation basis. Patrons donate what they can afford and feel the experience is worth (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009:26). Its first restaurant was established in St Kilda, Melbourne in 2000, and the most recent in Newtown, Sydney in 2014, and there are plans to expand to Adelaide. Melbourne is its largest operation with venues in Abbotsford, St Kilda, Footscray and Preston. Lentil as Anything’s philosophy is based on giving a “wholesome and nutritious meal where money is not a concern” (Lentil as Anything, 2015a). This social enterprise operates on a financial model involving donations and volunteering. Their values are centered on mutual respect, generosity, trust, equality, freedom and kindness (Lentil as Anything, 2015a). It is a social experiment that involves reciprocity – demonstrating that both “giving” as well as “receiving” generosity can be a successful model for economic sustainability. The concept encourages people to “think carefully about their own values and ethics” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009:26). The founder, Shanaka Fernando, says that he wants to “communicate to people that this is their space, there is no owner, there is no businessman making a profit out of it. It is our own space and we make of it, what we give to it, and we imperil it by what we take out of it – when we don’t regard our contribution in the right context” (per. comm. 23 July 2014). This has led, for example, to a sense of ownership and solidarity, even to the extent that when the restaurants are short-staffed customers have been known to volunteer their services. In this
aspect, both the customers and staff have a role in contributing to the kind of culture the restaurants promote. Lentil as Anything model the fact that a “commercial business can be financially successful and popular with the public while being operated on a socially responsible basis where the main priority is not profit” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009:26). Shanaka Fernando hopes this concept will inspire other restaurateurs and lead to a global movement (Fernando & Hill, 2012:175). He says that there are signs of this already happening with the openings of similar restaurants such as, “Pay as You Please” in Killarney, Ireland, “Kyneton as Anything” (now called Food Bowl), Bon Jovi’s series of restaurants in America called “Soul Kitchen”, and Radiohead’s album released online with the same pay-as-you-feel philosophy (Valentish, 2012). Perhaps this model can be an antidote to the culminating factors of the global financial crisis: “hubris, greed and heedlessness” (Fernando & Hill, 2012; Kakutani, 2009). The restaurants have a growing involvement in education, are involved in ongoing community projects to promote education on social sustainability issues, and have been used as a case study in primary schools in a module about values (Lentil as Anything, 2015a; Valentish, 2012). Shanaka has also published a book in 2013, Lentil as Anything: Food, Culture, Community, to celebrate food, stories, and the cultural diversity of the Lentil as Anything community. It includes recipes and profiles of key chefs at the Lentil as Anything restaurants, interviews with staff members and friends of Lentil as Anything, and articles from highly esteemed Australian authors Arnold Zable, Alice Pung, and Tara June Winch.

Shanaka Fernando is a modern-day social revolutionist who has achieved celebrity status through the success of the Lentil as Anything popular restaurant chain. He was invited to appear on the MasterChef show and his life work is featured throughout the media, for example see:

- TED talk: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jodpW59On7g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jodpW59On7g)

In recognition of his contribution to the betterment of humanity, Shanaka was given the “Australian of the Year – Local Hero” award in 2007 (Senaratne, 2014). He has received numerous other accolades including an Australian postage stamp in his honour, and a listing in Who’s Who in Australia, 2008 Edition (Wikipedia, 2015). Even though he was born to a privileged family in Sri Lanka, he was attuned to the poverty of his fellow citizens. His
biography *Lentil as Anything: Everybody deserves a place at the table*, articulates how the experiences in his life led to an early awakening to social division and inequality (Fernando & Hill, 2012). Later on in life, travelling and interacting with remote and indigenous communities in Asia and South America he came to understand how the sharing of a simple meal could bond people together in kinship (Senaratne, 2014). With this experience came the realisation that “food seemed the obvious vehicle” for bringing about social change (Senaratne, 2014). This was the catalyst for opening his first Lentil As Anything restaurant in St Kilda, Melbourne, as a cooperative and youth training centre (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009:26). Since then the restaurant has expanded into five outlets. The restaurant’s name rhymes with the Australian rock group “Mental as Anything” (Wikipedia, 2015), and correlates with the fact that lentil was a vital source of nutrition to our ancestors and brought cultures together (Kight, 2012). This underlines the mission of the restaurant – a commitment to bring people from all cultures, age groups and social status together in a spirit of community. Shanaka is cynical of the ways in which laws of society divide people rather than unite and empower (Fernando & Hill, 2012; Wikipedia, 2015). This challenging of the status quo has created many road blocks in the execution of the restaurants’ practices, but Shanaka says that he has been able to overcome them with the solidarity and support given by the community (as cited in Valentish, 2012). The restaurant maintains good supportive relationships with their customers, employees, suppliers, government agencies and local community which accounts for its success (Shanaka Fernando per. comm. 23 July 2014).

Shanaka’s way of life is to live by example and his social enterprise models this philosophy (Fernando & Hill, 2012). Shanaka says that sustainability is about maintaining an open and “curious” attitude and learning from the voice of fellow humans (per. comm. 23 July 2014). Shanaka believes that the progression of social sustainability is achieved through betterment of humanity, and there is a spiritual quality to his life work: “Lentil as Anything recognises the cause and effect otherwise known as karma, what we are all willing to contribute nourishes the continual evolution of conscious awareness and the Lentil As Anything experience” (Bolt, 2007). Providing a space for healing and finding out what people can give back to society is a quality that the restaurants want to model:

*The unseen aspects of Lentil, I think, are its strongest contribution to sustainability and that is the fact that people who feel that they haven’t had an opportunity to share themselves to, examine their nature and ideas in a social context, find that opportunity in that [restaurant’s] space. And I think that the healing that happens … we would struggle to quantify it.* (Shanaka Fernando per. comm. 23 July 2014)

Shanaka believes that we live in a society where social isolation and loss of identity is leading, for example, to obesity through comfort eating and other mental health conditions. He uses his restaurants as a social forum to create an atmosphere for social bonding and the
intermingling: “people feel a strong sense of family and connection having entered this space as strangers and then being drawn to this space to become regulars”, says Shanaka (per. comm. 23 July 2014). For example, social connections have led to people getting employment opportunities, forming bands and theatre groups, sharing houses, and even getting married. The restaurant provides an inclusive space for artists, musicians, and writers, etc., and other such groups to congregate (for example, vegan club). Their Preston branch which opened Lentil on the Rocks provides an environment where non-alcohol drinkers, especially teenagers, could socialise (Fotiadis, 2014).

Each restaurant is embedded into the social fabric of the local community, culture and environment (Shanaka Fernando per. comm. 23 July 2014) and creates a “sense of place” for the local residents, as well as the visitors to the locality. The restaurants are a cultural melting-pot, and regular community events are organised to facilitate respect and trust between cultures. Shanaka works at humanising people to be inclusive and accepting by facilitating cultural awareness. For example, every year in country Victoria the restaurants organise a tree planting event and takes 100 refugees as well as volunteer staff to spend quality time with the farmers, school children and local community, and this gathering is catered for by the restaurants’ chefs. Working with refugees and other disadvantaged groups is an important part of the restaurant’s practices. They provide certified training for people on the “work for the dole” scheme, long-term unemployed, refugees and others seeking assistance (Not Quite Nigella, 2014). Shanaka says that it is about giving people respect and dignity – to help them feel like they’re not a burden on society (per. comm. 23 July 2014). Proceeds remaining after the overheads from the restaurants are used for certified hospitality training for this purpose (Shanaka Fernando per. comm. 23 July 2014).

The restaurants also make a significant contribution to environmental sustainability, in addition to the annual 6000 to 10,000 trees planted in country Victoria (Shanaka Fernando per. comm. 23 July 2014). They not only source seasonal, local and organic produce, but also grow their own. They are part of an “urban garden collective” community venture:

*Our philosophy is based upon the underlying values of food security, self-sufficiency, reclaiming community dynamics, and growing food using natural methods for Lentils’ kitchens and the neighbourhood. We believe in a basic human right to have access to safe and nutritious food ... Through the creation of these gardens, Lentils will have a deepened sense of food security to continue feeding the community.* (Lentil as Anything, 2015b)

The décor of the restaurants is kept simple using environmental “outcasts” in creative ways. A recent campaign was run to educate customers about food waste: “generosity and abundance shouldn’t be confused with irresponsibility” says Shanaka (per. comm. 23 July 2014).
Shanaka says that the restaurants need to be self-sustaining economically and that their restaurant model is overall successful – they have been operating for 15 years and serve one million meals a year across its outlets (Worrall, 2015). This has been made possible by generous donations by customers worth approximately $3 million a year, and volunteer labour worth $7 million (Shanaka Fernando per. comm. 23 July 2014). On average, a donation of about $12 would cover the costs of a meal and overheads (Worrall, 2015). Those who are unable to pay are encouraged to volunteer. However, this model of not-for-profit business operated on generosity is not without its impediments. For example, some customers come for a “free feed”; after a recent festival event it was reported that despite the long line of crowds that was catered for, a significant loss was made with an average of about $2.75 per head received for a meal (Worrall, 2015). This resulted in staff educating the public about the costs of running each restaurant and the significance of customer contribution towards a good cause. Shanaka says that it is important “not to reach beyond their means” and keep a close eye on the finances, especially as they had a substantial financial loss in previous years due to mismanagement. They are becoming more vigilant after an accumulated debt of $170,000 that is now being paid off gradually (per. comm. 23 July 2014). However, he says for him, it is not about profit-driven success: “we’re not too reliant on results other than what we do on a daily basis which is just make food available and see what happens around that and it’s quite a nice adventure” (per. comm. 23 July 2014).

Lentil receives many good reviews. Outside the restaurant a pin board displays some very moving letters of gratitude and commendation. Some examples of reviews from the social media are as follows:

*Everything about this place is amazing. the concept of it is amazing. the staff have always been amazing. non for profit, volunteers working, pay what you think it’s worth, and the food is so delicious!!!! (Urbanspoon, 2014a)*

*Lentils is a very special place. The unique concept attracts all kinds of people and the food is always filling and nourishing... (Urbanspoon, 2015)*

*I love Lentils & have been a volunteer for approx. 12mths & still love it. I work thru the week in Sales, & volunteer in the kitchen every Sunday, helping the paid staff, as a Kitchen hand... I must admit I did not know what I was getting myself into, because I used to be so critical about people coming to*
Australia, thinking that all people who came into Australia were lazy, until I met some of the kitchen staff at Lentils. How wrong I was to judge!!! Most of the people at Lentils are hardworking individuals contributing to the community, & working in the kitchen, I have not heard once any complaints about how hard they work, they just do it, even in the extreme heat!!! I am so proud of being a volunteer, & do wish that more volunteers would give Lentils a hand, even if is a few hours per week. The Chefs are absolutely amazing at how creative they make the meals, & I am still learning such invaluable skills in the kitchen... Like I said before, I am only a volunteer, only a kitchen hand, but love to help out as much as I can. At the end of the day, I wish all people were hard working as Lentils, with the same attitude, and maybe if people were, what a difference it would make this country. I urge you all, please give Lentils a hand, make a difference, you will learn a lot of various skills, & also develop friendships along the way as well. You certainly will not regret it!!! (Urbanspoon, 2014b).

References


Stop homelessness the delicious way ... we’re dedicated to maximising our social footprint, while minimising our environmental one. (STREAT, 2015)

STREAT is a social enterprise with a vision to, “stop youth homelessness and disadvantage, one mouthful at a time” (STREAT, 2015). Inspired by KOTO, a training program and restaurant providing street youth with job opportunities in Vietnam, Rebecca Scott and Kate Barrelle, founded STREAT in 2010 with a class of nine trainees and two small food carts, in Melbourne’s Federation Square. By 2014 STREAT had expanded within Melbourne to four cafés, one coffee roastery and one production kitchen (for catering business), and helped over 180 young people aged between 16 and 25 years to break the cycle of homelessness (Sunisa, 2014). Its outstanding contribution to social sustainability has been recognised with many accolades, such as the 2014 Australia’s most prestigious specialty coffee GOLD award, 2013 Most Innovative Australian Social Enterprise, David Clarke Scholarship for outstanding leadership in social change, 2013 Business 3000+ Award in the Social Enterprise category, and Youth Now award for Best Employer of Students with Additional Needs. STREAT claims they strive for holistic sustainability through “People, Planet & Profit” (STREAT, 2013).
Rebecca Scott, co-founder and CEO of STREAT, cautions that “homelessness” should not be confused with “houselessness”, as a “home” is more than bricks and mortar, and that getting this message across to both disadvantaged at-risk youth, as well as the general public is important. Rebecca stated at Youth Week 2014:

*STREAT was designed in part by our frustration with the existing system that treated homelessness as primarily an accommodation issue. The system seemed focussed on crisis accommodation and short-term relief, often neglecting the complex set of personal circumstances that might lead a young person into homelessness, and often similarly neglecting the wide range of supports a young person needed to get them out of it. We wanted to build a holistic model that understood that to thrive a young person needed not just a stable home, but also a stable life, and a stable job.* (Scott, 2014)

These include addressing multiple barriers to achieving stability in young people’s lives, such as homelessness, mental health concerns, drug and alcohol additions, issues leading to the youth justice system, intellectual or learning disabilities and limited or disrupted schooling. Therefore, in addition to the vocational skills training, youth life skills programs are conducted by specialised staff, for example youth coordinators and clinical psychologists, to
address the “reasons why someone might be not very employable or has [become] homeless” (Jen Miller per. comm. 23 July 2014).

The quality and effectiveness of programs are maintained by being evidence-based and outcome focused, and ongoing evaluation. Although the programs are hospitality focused, the skills are transferrable to other vocations. Three program options of varying length and knowledge are offered: (1) Tasters – half to one day programs introducing trainees to coffee and food; (2) Entrée – flexible work experience opportunities for trainees wanting to access hospitality focused work experience without other program components; and (3) Main Course – fully supported program including on-the-job training and mentoring, a life skills group program, creative and social engagement and individualised wrap-around case support, including linkages to specialist service providers (Jen Miller per. comm. 23 July 2014). In addition to STREAT’s employment skilling program with its social impact, they are also actively involved in environmental sustainability initiatives by sourcing 90% of their food produce locally from fellow social enterprise Spade and Barrow, and organic and certified beans from small farming co-operatives and individual estates (Rebecca Scott, 2014). They use completely biodegradable packaging while also working to improve waste reduction through a planned worm farm. They expect to green energy all sites, greening the whole supply chain, and designing environmentally friendly construction and fit-out of their Cromwell STREAT development (STREAT, 2013). In referring to environmental sustainability, they state that the “best ways we can make an impact is by educating ourselves and the public as best we can and spread awareness” (Berrin, 2010). STREAT’s training curriculum and street café menu offer an eco-gastronomic perspective, “as a fusion of the best of slow food and fast food: food that’s fresh, tasty, healthy, fair, and cultural” (STREAT, 2015). STREAT also maintains a highly active presence in the social media, which features many educative blogs on homelessness, and food and the politics of food. For example, in a section of their webpage titled “Green from Paddock to Plate”, they quote Alice Waters, the owner of Chez Panisse Restaurant and founder of The Edible Schoolyard: “[l]earning to make the right choices about food is the single most important key to environmental awareness — for ourselves, and especially for our children” (STREAT, 2015). This reference to food confirms our project hypotheses that restaurateurs are setting in motion social change by educating the public that “eating is a political act” that involves making sustainable choices.

The way in which the restaurant or café markets itself successfully is another area of interest to us. Rebecca, who has a communications background, believes that public relations and a credible profile are all vital to obtaining support for the program. She uses the media to educate the public, and as a result has been able to secure highly competitive grants and other forms of financial aid from enterprises. STREAT educates the public by sharing their knowledge within the social enterprise, business and community sector through participation in research and case studies, presentations, all forms of media and press, and encouraging site visits by other social enterprises. For example see her
Findings from a 2013 survey of 85 STREAT trainees shows that 92% had improved well-being, 100% improved housing stability, 82% were in further training or already working within six months of completing their program (Social Ventures Australia; STREAT, 2013). STREAT, in partnership with Franklyn Scholar (a leading workforce education program), plans to train over 250 young people each year, upon building its new flagship Cromwell training academy (Scott, 2014). However, its social enterprise aspect was kept low key at the Melbourne central city café we visited (no signs outdoors/entrance to the café), as STREAT is concerned flagging this may lead people to think that it is low quality hospitality run on charity: “Most people say that they drink our coffee because it tastes good. Seems logical, but this is cause for celebration for a social enterprise. We want to be known for the quality of our product, not the pity story that might convince people to purchase with us once” (STREAT, 2015). STREAT recently changed their marketing slogan “stop homelessness the delicious way” to ‘taste good does good’. However, information that educates customers about homelessness was displayed discreetly indoors, for example, via signage, a photo board, and brochures. Jen Miller Business manager at STREAT states that 80% of their loyal customers know exactly what they do in terms of addressing homelessness.

In terms of economic sustainability, although funded currently by external sources, Jen Miller states that STREAT is on an increasing pathway to be self-sufficient with 65% to 75% of costs being covered by their business operations alone, and all revenue from the businesses funding the program suite (per. comm. 23 July 2014). In 2014, STREAT received a $500,000 Commemorative Grant from The Ian Potter Foundation, which will help them achieve both full financial self-sufficiency and its goal of helping 1095 young homeless people each year. The funding will be used to build a new youth training academy at Cromwell Manor which is a historic Collingwood property. STREAT has been gifted the use and development rights of this $2.5 million site for 50 years, rent-free by businessman and philanthropist Geoff Harris (Sunisa, 2015).
The development is expected to enable STREAT to more than double their income. This will help them to expand operations to establish a large café, artisan bakery, another coffee roastery, catering kitchen, special event spaces, training rooms and offices. At a speech given at this event, Rebecca Scott stated, “[a] social enterprise has a business brain and a social heart. This grant taps into both of these – it allows us to further grow our business operations to complete self-sufficiency, whilst expanding the number of young people we can help each year” (Sunisa, 2014). This success story provides encouragement to others and sends the message that by doing good you can build a sustainable business.

References
Charcoal Lane in Melbourne: Creating a dining experience with a social conscience

Commitment to supporting sustainable employment for disadvantaged Indigenous youth and creating a modern Australian cuisine with Indigenous ingredients.

Charcoal Lane is a social enterprise offering hospitality training and social support to Indigenous youth. It operates from a 148 year-old iconic, bluestone building located in the inner city suburb of Fitzroy, Melbourne. It is a unique high-end restaurant offering modern Australian, seasonally inspired cuisine infused with native ingredients. Named after the famous Archie Roach song and situated in a building of important Aboriginal social and cultural significance – previously home to the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service – Charcoal Lane pays respect to the local Aboriginal Koorie culture and native food. It is a commercially viable social enterprise established in July 2009 by Mission Australia (a national community service organisation) in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Heath Service (VAHS), William Angliss Institute, and Accor Hotels (Kernot & McNeill, 2011: 8-9). The aim of this social enterprise is to provide holistic support to enable disadvantaged young Indigenous Australians a successful transition to sustainable mainstream employment. The enterprise provides trainees with on-the-job hospitality industry skills training, accredited certified education from the William Angliss Institute, professional work placements in the hospitality industry, as well as support for social and emotional well-being. There are two certification levels. The first is a Certificate II in Hospitality conducted through the William Angliss Institute of TAFE, which is an introductory level 20 week program with a capacity for approximately 15 trainees. The second is a Certificate III in Commercial Cookery, which is a 12 to 18 month trainee program for 12 trainees (Graaff, 2010).

The venture started through an initiative from the government called “A fairer Victoria”, which led to Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) and VAHS issuing a public tender (Shaw, 2009). From this process, Mission Australia was selected to establish a social enterprise café to provide hospitality training, education and employment opportunities to disadvantaged Aboriginal youth. As a result, VAHS sublet its building to Mission Australia on the understanding that full market rent will not be charged during the three year establishment period and AAV would contribute funds to the fit-out costs. The restaurant and training program were expected to be self-supporting after this first three year
Mission explained at the entrance to the restaurant. (Photo. G Wijesinghe).

establishment period. During this establishment process, Charcoal Lane had both a Business Advisory Group and Aboriginal Advisory Group (Kernot & McNeill, 2011:9). The initial decision was to establish a low key café, but the concept evolved to a more substantial enterprise, as high-profile restaurants and other up-market venues started opening up locally with the gentrification of the Fitzroy area. This upgrading was expected to make the enterprise more resilient and increase the capacity for employment opportunities (Kernot & McNeill, 2011:8). However, its initial establishment as a fine dining restaurant was not proving to be economically sustainable in the long haul (Ashan Abeykoon per. comm. 23 July 2014): operating costs, pricing of menu items, and customer expectations were all high, causing financial strain on the enterprise; the trainees had to compete with experienced fine dining staff in the wider employment market; menu prices were less affordable to customers and the cuisine was regarded as a one-off “special occasion experience” rather than regular dining.

To address this situation, Restaurant Manager Ashan Abeykoon was loaned from Accor Hotels as part of its Planet 21 commitment to sustainable development, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program. With Ashan’s guidance, the restaurant was restructured to cater for everyday dining. The menu prices were reduced dramatically, incorporating more seasonal and local produce, and as a result, the restaurant is currently one of the less expensive restaurants in the area. Ashan says that in 2014 the wage and food costs were brought down to less than 30% and the restaurant became fully self-funded (per. comm. 23 July 2014). In terms of the economic sustainability aspect of low cost, Charcoal Lane believes keeping “waste low and seasonal produce high on the agenda is critical” (2014). Also, Mission Australia says that being able to demonstrate social impact is crucial to securing funding and ongoing support (Kernot & McNeill, 2011:251). A number of organisations are part of this successful social outreach program and supports Charcoal Lane in various ways (there is a listing of their supporters at the entrance to the restaurant).

When Charcoal Lane was first launched, Mission Australia’s state director Paul Bird explained, “[j]ust like Melbourne embraces international cultures and celebrates them through food, Charcoal Lane is about reconciliation and understanding through food” (Topsfield, 2009). However, it was decided that the Aboriginal themes would be kept subtle in the fit-out and food. Vicki Maughan, Mission Australia’s community services
manager explains that the VAHS did not want it to be gimmicky, as the quality of the culinary experience would speak for itself (Kernot & McNeill, 2011:9). This has certainly proved to be true given the current popularity and iconic status of the restaurant. A number of critics, including celebrity chef Jamie Oliver (who had his own socially enterprising Fifteen restaurant chain), were sceptical that the restaurant would be able to survive the market competition (Coslovich, 2012). As the Sydney Morning Herald reported, “[y]ou set up shop in one of the busiest, most competitive dining strips in Melbourne, with a concept that’s not an entirely easy sell: a menu featuring native ingredients, and a staff comprising disadvantaged, mainly Indigenous young people ... That’s been the test for Charcoal Lane” (Coslovich, 2012). A key factor in the restaurant’s long-term sustainability has been its creative application of native Australian ingredients whilst keeping the menu familiar and affordable (per. comm. 23 July 2014). The restaurant’s recipes have changed over the years, but the creative use of native Australian ingredients still remains. These ingredients are often naturally grown, seasonal produce, and sourced locally. The menu is kept as sustainable as possible, in relation to both the environment and the Indigenous communities that gather them. The restaurant is also a strong supporter of small businesses that practice organic farming. They maintain good relationships with their suppliers, and source food from fellow social enterprises, such as Spade and Barrow. An added benefit is that due to the intense flavour of native food, only a small quantity is needed (Graaff, 2010; Rousseau, 2010).

The enterprise’s practice of educating for sustainability extends to all three pillars of holistic sustainability, and this is of significance to our research project. These aspects involve the ways in which the Australian mainstream and Indigenous cultural interactions are fostered, socially and economically sustainable ways of living are brought to the forefront, and important role played by sustainably sourced produce is communicated. The menu symbolises the unity of the two cultures: “It’s a way of sharing the story of the Australian land and environment” (Dimmi Ltd, 2015). However, the cuisine should not be confused with authentic “Aboriginal food” cautions Ashan, as Aboriginal food does not involve too much cooking (per. comm. 23 July 2014). The current (2015) Executive Chef, Greg Hampton, is a qualified horticulturalist and teacher who has been instrumental in designing and delivering a curriculum based on native Australian ingredients at the William Angliss Hospitality Institute (Charcoal Lane, 2014). At Charcoal Lane, Greg’s role is to educate the Indigenous trainees on how to incorporate native ingredients and contemporary cooking techniques to prepare uniquely Australian dishes (per. comm. 23 July 2014). The restaurant also provides cooking classes at almost cost price to the general public, and school tour groups are a regular occurrence. There is also an arrangement with cruise liners to provide classes for tourists (per. comm. 23 July 2014). In terms of communicating the message of sustainability in the commercial world, Ashan says that terms such as “organic, sustainable, preservative-free, no-artificial colours”, have all become buzz words and lost their impact (per. comm. 23 July 2014). He believes that to engage people to practice sustainability, it is
necessary to get them to participate in an educative experience that they could relate to in a personal way. Ashan believes the cooking classes that Charcoal Lane conducts serves this purpose effectively (per. comm. 23 July 2014). Former Charcoal Lane Executive Chef, Damien Styles, stated:

[b]ush foods are rich in culinary, cultural and medicinal value, but many people are unsure how to approach them. This [cooking] event is a great way for the growing number of curious cooks, consumers and diners to learn about their unique flavours and, most importantly, their culinary and cultural significance to the traditional owners of the land ... Partnerships are key ... We can’t have a mature Australian cuisine using bush ingredients without partnerships and respect. (as cited in Top Local, 2010)

At these educative cooking events, bush food producers, distributors and Aboriginal elders are invited to share their knowledge of the cultural, culinary and botanical richness of bush foods and provide tips on how to grow, cook and source them in Melbourne (Top Local, 2010). The local community has also benefited from learning more about Koori culture, history and food through the restaurant’s social events (Office for the Community Sector, 2010). Whilst the social enterprise aspect is not promoted actively as an educative tool, customers are made aware of this in subtle ways: at the entrance to the restaurant its mission is displayed and the menu also provides a description of the restaurant’s purpose. Charcoal Lane’s modern Australian décor is brought into harmony with Indigenous culture by incorporating Aboriginal artwork and a traditional Indigenous eel trap used as a lampshade. A display featuring “Sorry” (denoting reconciliation) is also prominent. Ashan states that about 60% of the customers appear to already be aware of the social enterprise aspect and the other 40% often leave the restaurant understanding the vision of the enterprise (per. comm. 23 July 2014). The restaurant also communicates the message of sustainability to the general public by facilitating scholarly study and social and conventional media coverage. Other social sustainability aspects of this restaurant involve educating the Indigenous youth of their cultural heritage and bridging the gap between Indigenous youth and their elders. Charcoal Lane states that:

[t]o develop a safe and supportive environment for our trainees we have strong relationships with the local Koorie community. Cultural development is at the heart of what we do ... As a social enterprise we aim to operate a business that provides a social benefit or outcome to both individuals and the community. Ultimately we achieve this by helping young Aboriginal people
develop a pathway to ongoing education or employment and paying respect to their culture. (Charcoal Lane, 2014)

The enterprise provides a mentoring program for the Indigenous trainees involving Aboriginal and other leaders in the community (Mission Australia, n.d.). They also help marginalised youth experiencing barriers to sustainable mainstream employment to bridge the gap – their transitional labour market program provides ongoing high-level life and employability skills through specialised health and well-being referrals and consultations. This program was established as training alone was insufficient to sustain the trainees’ ability to cope with the “rigor of a quality commercial environment” (Kernot & McNeill, 2011:11). Ashan says that they provide 24 hour support to trainees, and Mission Australia addresses all issues relating to housing, health, transport, and personal challenges to enable trainees to have a better frame of mind to attend to their employment. In 2014 their retention rate was 100% and 156 trainees have graduated so far (per. comm. 23 July 2014).

Another important aspect of the restaurant is its contribution to re-creating a sense of place for the Koori Indigenous community. The name “Charcoal Lane” is of much significance as a local meeting place in Victorian Aboriginal history. Originally, Charcoal Lane was the location of a briquette factory in the Fitzroy-Collingwood area, where many Aboriginal people, often after work, came together to share knowledge and socialise (Mission Australia, n.d.). However, the government’s gentrification of the area had resulted in a sense of displacement for the local Koori community (Harris, 2003). Later, government housing was built in Fitzroy to accommodate Aboriginal and migrant people with low incomes. At the request of the local Aboriginal community, Mission Australia named the restaurant Charcoal Lane (Mission Australia, n.d.). However, in the early days of the restaurant establishment there was some hostility towards the fine dining style of cuisine, as it appeared to have removed the local Aboriginal aspect, and Indigenous elders did not want their youth to attend Charcoal Lane for training (per. comm. 23 July 2014). So, the restaurant had to address these issues and engage in strong relationship and reputation building. As a result, it is now considered to be an important part of the Koori community: “we are getting to be one of them, we are not here as a separate ‘White people’ pushing the native name and making money, so that was a big step for us”, Ashan stated in our interview. Charcoal Lane contributes to a number of community events such as the Fitzroy Reconciliation Week breakfast, local street events, and a free local BBQ hosted monthly. Charcoal Lane is an important social enterprise in Melbourne’s café landscape. The partnerships that are behind its operations demonstrate the way partnerships for social change can be formed to use a café in creative and transformative ways.

References
“Koorie” is a term denoting an Aboriginal person of southern New South Wales or Victoria. “Koorie” is not a synonym for “Aboriginal”. There are many other Aboriginal groups across Australia (such as Murri, Noongar, Yolngu) with which Indigenous Australians may identify themselves. Indigenous Australians are highly mobile and one cannot assume that an Aboriginal person who happens to be living in south-east Australia is a Koorie. It is often preferable to use more general terms such as “Aboriginal people” or “Indigenous Australians” (Indigenous Teaching at Australian Universities, 2012).

mountain Pepper Berries from South Gippsland, Kakadu plums, Bunyah tree nuts, gum, pepper leaf, lilly-pilly, Doringo peppers, lemon myrtle, lemon tea tree, and finger limes etc. Dishes have included Wallaby tartare, yam fritters, peppered kangaroo fillet, barramundi and samphire ravioli and gumleaf sabayon, raspberry cannelloni with rosella flowers, dukkah-crusted saltbush lamb with lilly-pilly, pepper leaf couscous, and steamed apple and muntries berry pudding (Durack, 2014; Graaff, 2010).
Brothl by Joost Bakker in Melbourne: Commitment to zero waste

The hospitality industry is shockingly wasteful and I wanted to show that it could be done differently. (Joost Bakker cited in Prior, 2015)

Joost Bakker’s work is synonymous with sustainable practice in eateries. Known for his 2008 pop-up restaurant in Melbourne’s Federation Square which featured cutting edge sustainability, he followed it up with other pop-up ventures in Perth and Sydney and then permanent restaurants including Silo on Hardware Street in Melbourne’s CBD. In his new restaurant iteration, Brothl, which builds on the work of Silo, Joost Bakker invites us “to imagine a world without waste” (menu Brothl). Joost began as a florist and designer, supplying unique flower arrangement for the best restaurants around Australia. This in fact planted the seed that eventually led to Brothl: “I’ve been doing the flowers for Rockpool for years, ever since it opened. I would go in there every week and see the bones from their meats and seafood, and I said to Neil [Perry], if you are not using these, could I take some?” (Bakker cited in Gowdie, 2014). As Joost said in the interview with us, he asked Neil Perry, “Can I base my business on your waste?” (pers. comm. 4 December 2014).

This research project explored the life story of the restaurateur in order to identify what catalysts might have sparked their unique vision. For Joost, most media reports have noted his interest in waste and its inventive re-use from his youth in Holland; we also learned his father had been a publican and his family farmers. These seem to be the seeds that have come together to make a creative and eccentric visionary who has gained national and international attention as he explores solutions to feeding people healthy and nutritious food in our urban areas while reducing the waste generated to almost zero and searching for solutions through “infinite recyclability”.

Brothl’s cheeky name comes from the broths that are featured on the menu. These broths (seafood, chicken, beef and vegetable) are made using rainwater from Joost’s Monbolk farm, locally sourced and organically grown fruits and vegetables, and most importantly “collaborating with Attica and Rockpool to upcycle the best quality produce and bones” (Brothl menu). It is a risk to create a menu almost exclusively made up of broths and this daring move indicates the commitment that Joost has to showcasing the waste reductions possible in hospitality rather than emphasising the maximum profitability.
Joost described his thinking as pragmatic and he doesn’t accept the conventional rhetoric on sustainability which has become accepted dogma, such as carbon footprint assessments. So, for instance, he disagrees with those who alarm us to a coming food crisis; he argues if we innovatively grew our food on city buildings, used nutrients such as urine, currently wasted, and we changed our minds about which foods are desirable (he advocates carp, for instance), we would have all the foods we need to sustain us into the future. Joost acts as a catalyst to thinking outside-the-box and seeks to transform our consciousness through his thought-provoking practices.

The key focus of the restaurant is on zero waste. “My philosophy is everything is related, it’s holistic. You can be passionate about doing one thing a certain way and not worry about the rest of things in your life. That’s why a restaurant is so good, because I can nail every single component and put my philosophy on it. I believe it is possible to have a completely zero-waste world. It’s not far-fetched ... people will change very quickly when they see it can work” (Bakker cited in Tippet, 2012). At Brothl, he has implemented this vision.

Using the waste products of other restaurants, he has created a menu based on broths that generate little waste; what organic waste that is generated is put into a closed loop composting system which reduces the organic matter by 90% in just 24 hours, which then goes to farmers to use as a rich fertilizer for their fields to supply the next season’s vegetables. Even the bones are reduced to biochar which enriches the soil significantly.

A key aim of this project is to understand how restaurants and cafés might teach sustainability in some form to their stakeholders. With Brothl, the whole enterprise is based on this notion of pedagogy through modelling alternatives. This begins with the taking of waste meats which others throw in the bin – this has been an influential catalyst for other restaurateurs and chefs. However, it does not stop there. Suppliers have been encouraged to develop packaging which can be re-used; one example he gave is the use of the recycled plastic crates for the continual delivery of vegetables. Joost’s example has been influential in getting even the most mainstream commercial premises in Melbourne to change over to mineral water on tap, for instance. Another important outcome of his example is the take-up of the closed loop composting system which Joost claims some 100 restaurants have done, diverting some 4000 tonnes of organic waste away from landfill each year (pers. comm. 4 December 2014). The fact that the glass-doored refrigeration cabinet at the
entrance is stacked with vegetables for the broths rather than the ubiquitous plastic drinks of other café is a point of teaching restaurant customers to think about their consumption choices. But Joost’s practice isn’t forceful or preachy; as he states, “I just focus on what I am doing and I especially hate telling people what to do. I rather just do it and if people like it, they’ll be inspired” (Bakker cited in Green, 2012). Neither is Joost proprietary of his ideas: “It’s all about, the more people that think about it [possible solutions] it’ll just evolve and become smarter and better” (pers. comm. 4 December 2014).

Joost’s practice also features building relationships with his suppliers so that he sources sustainable and ethical products for Brothl, from the beeswax candles to the kegs for milk on tap. His supportive engagement with small producers and even his staff has also had a spin-off affect as many have gone on to build their own businesses after the start they got with Silo/ Brothl.

Recent news about Brothl provides us with clear evidence for Joost’s use of the restaurant as a model of best practice zero waste in the restaurant sector. Joost has recently stated he will close Brothl because he has not been able to resolve a long-running dispute with Melbourne City Council over his closed loop organic waste composter which is situated in the laneway beside the restaurant; the Council wants a contract signed with Bakker accepting all liability for the composter and a fee paid of $12 500 (Worrall, 2015). It is important to note that having the composter located just next to the restaurant is a key feature of the modelling of sustainability, as restaurant customers and other stakeholders
see it and learn about zero waste as a result. That Joost would close the restaurant rather than lose the composter indicates that he sees the restaurant as a model of sustainability to transform current practices rather than simply as a commercial enterprise.

It is clear that Joost Bakker has shaken up the hospitality sector through his creativity and is recognised for his influence; for instance, in 2012 his achievements were recognised with an Innovation Award at the Age Good Food Guide Awards. But his aims and his targets of influence are not limited to this domain as he advocates for sustainability in all aspects of human endeavour. His creativity is boundless as he is now celebrated as an “artist/gardener/environmental designer/eco-entrepreneur” (Tippet, 2012). While Brothl has now closed, unfortunately, we have no doubt Bakker’s efforts to promote zero waste in the hospitality sector will continue.

References


Mesa Verde Restaurant and Bar in Melbourne: Rooftop garden and Australia’s first rooftop worm farm

The worm farm is the cornerstone of an ambitious, possibly unique Australian experiment that aims to create an almost self-sustaining, waste-free eco-system in the most unlikely of urban contexts: the running of a hip CBD restaurant. (McMahon, 2013)

Mesa Verde is a Mexican restaurant and saloon style bar located in Curtin House in Swanston Street, in the Melbourne CBD. Its name is inspired by the movie “Fistful of Dollars”. Mesa Verde also means “green table” in Spanish and this restaurant is definitely a “green restaurant” in every sense of the word (Australian Design Review, 2014). Located on the level just below the rooftop of an inner city building, Mesa Verde’s unique feature is that it houses Australia’s first rooftop worm farm. The worm farm uses up kitchen waste and supplies fertiliser to grow difficult to source Mexican herbs and speciality chillies and vegetables for the restaurant and bar (Australian Design Review, 2014). Worm castings are supposedly one of the best plant food and soil conditioners, equivalent to “super food” for plants (Richard as cited in The Bharani Effect, 2014). The restaurateurs’ aim is to create a self-sustaining, waste free eco-system through the zero waste restaurant practices, as well as greening the whole supply chain. Richard Thomas, the brainchild behind this concept, says, “Returning organic waste back to create productive soils is now urgent, as we begin to run out of productive soils, nutrients and water. A big realisation is that food waste is not actually waste; it’s an unused resource” (as cited in The Bharani Effect, 2014). Referring to the worm farm at Mesa Verde, he says, “We're closing the loop. All the organic waste comes out here and gets eaten up by the worms and the end product goes straight back up into the garden, it grows more food” (as cited in McMahon, 2013). The wasted nutrients are not only upcycled back to food production, but the process also helps reduce water, fertiliser and fossil fuel usage at the same time. He says that the world urgently needs to change from a linear economy
where food is used and wasted to a circular economy, where everything that is used is valued and returned for re-use elsewhere (as cited in The Bharani Effect, 2014). With this closed loop, zero waste system, 30 different varieties of herbs and veggies are grown to be served yet again to customers (Rose, 2014). Once the worms are going full pelt, it is estimated that they will chow through 10 kilograms of organic vegetable waste and coffee grounds from the kitchen every day (McMahon, 2013). For the execution of this unique concept, Mesa Verde, incorporating Wormlovers, was awarded *The Small Business Victoria Sustainability Award* at the 2013 Business 3000+ Awards Ceremony.

Mesa Verde opened in 2013 with the dedication and commitment of “worm lover” and sustainability champion Richard Thomas, and with the vision and financial backing of the building’s owners Tim Peach and Eric Firth. Richard Thomas, the Australian importer of the *Hungry Bin worm farms* is a long-time friend of Tim Peach. Richard had pitched this ambitious idea for the rooftop garden and worm farm to Tim and Eric, and they made this dream become a reality, even though it required substantial financial investment on their part. It took two years from concept design to implementation, involving intensive planning, building alterations, and council approvals (McMahon, 2013) and required an investment
well in excess of $150,000 (Rose, 2014). Referring to the owners of Curtin House and investors of the project, Richard says, “These guys are visionaries. They bought this building when Swanston St was a desert, when the building was derelict, and they saw the potential. They’ve pumped millions into it over the years – it’s the first vertical laneway, the first rooftop cinema. They’re pioneers, which is why they’ve invested in this project, despite the cost and the challenges” (as cited in Rose, 2014). The economic sustainability of the venture is of interest to our project. Mesa Verde certainly has required a large financial backing as rooftop farming in Australia is a challenge that will require significant investment. This is because buildings are not designed, like in America, to bear extra weight of snow falls (Rose, 2014). For Kathy, the Executive Chef and part owner of the business, it is not about being economically driven, but being pragmatic. “It will be a long payback period but they’re looking to the next generation” (Richard as cited in McMahon, 2013). Funds permitting, their aim is to triple the growing area of the rooftop over the next few years.

This Mexican cantina that serves 120 to 130 different types of tequila and nearly 40 different types of Mezcal, has bartenders who make innovative cocktails using herbs and garnishes from the garden, such as fresh strawberry, cucumber, ginger and burnt rosemary (Mesa Verde, 2015), and there are plans to use some unusual hops growing up the fences for home brews (Richard, as cite in The Bharani Effect, 2014). Their menu items are 95% gluten free and consist of seasonal produce. Mesa Verde’s greening does not end with upcycling, organically grown food that are used in innovative ways, and the bar bench made from recycled Messmate; they have a number of other environmental initiatives. Their watering system uses rainwater while providing passive cooling to the highly efficient cool-room below, and plans are underway to recycle grey water to create a fully contained green environment (Australian Design Review, 2014). In the next stages of the project they plan to have plantings on other levels, create vertical gardens, install solar panels to light the garden and power the pumps. The project is also expected to incorporate a suspended burnt out log from an ancient Redgum tree from the Grampian Mountains that is several hundred years old (The Bharani Effect, 2014).

They believe that one of the quickest ways to change environmental impact is to grow or buy locally grown food (Richard, as cite in The Bharani Effect, 2014). In sourcing local produce they have been working with their suppliers to reduce landfill, for example, by swapping over and re-using cardboard boxes; “They’re really good quality, probably expensive boxes. We just do whatever we can to minimize waste wherever we can” says Kathy (pers. comm. 23rd July 2014). They source from local suppliers, with whom they have good relationships; “I don’t think of it as an economic thing … You work with suppliers that you like. You find people who are a good fit …. it’s just the ethos we have which is kind of hand-made and local and sustainable. It’s just been how we see the world, I guess from the start” (pers. comm. 23rd July 2014). The weaving of close relationships comes out quite strongly in this business, not only with their staff, investors, and suppliers, but also with other businesses in the building. Kathy, already acquainted with Tim as well as his wife (who
owns the bookstore downstairs) before joining the business, says that there’s “real camaraderie” all around them. Mesa Verde works closely with the rooftop cinema Tim owns that is managed by the same General Manager. Although they are separate businesses, “we are like cousins” says Kathy; they share the same office space, cater for special events and functions for the cinema, and provide movie deals.

The garden enhances the aesthetics and amenity of the building for staff and an opportunity for relaxation. There is educative signage on the rooftop for staff about the environmental impact of upcycling, but unfortunately customers do not have access to this confined area, probably due to occupational health and safety reasons; and certainly alfresco dining in the company of the worms would not be a popular pursuit. While this treasured garden is unknown to patrons, those who look up reviews in the social media will find plenty of references to Mesa Verde’s sustainability practices. In terms of educating and inspiring the public about sustainability, Richard says, “living sustainably is living consciously. Not in some cosmic new age way but acting ethically; being responsible for your actions. You soon realize that every action has an environmental effect and the power to change is in your hands … Once people start thinking consciously they automatically start living sustainably” (as cited in The Bharani Effect, 2014). The Australian Design Review (2014) applauds them: “Mesa Verde has developed a self-sufficient ecosystem high in the sky that takes sustainability to another level”.

Rooftop Garden. (Photo G. Wijesinghe)
References


The Grain Store: Honest cooking in Melbourne

Good food is more than something we serve up on a plate. It’s a way of life. (The Grain Store, n.d.)

The title of this inviting eating establishment, located on Flinders Lane, harkens back to the days when this area of Melbourne hosted warehouses which stored grains and other goods unloaded from the nearby Yarra River. Opened by Chef Ingo Meissner (previously of Sydney’s Hilton and Melbourne’s Crown Casino) and Melanie Stolpe, this couple have created a place where local, seasonal food shines. Drawing on their German heritage, which featured seasonal, wholesome, family cooking, Ingo and Melanie offer “honest cooking” in a beautiful and comfortable setting (The Grain Store, n.d.). They even have actual barn doors in the restaurant to evoke the farms and the farmers that provide the ingredients for the menu.

Restaurant reviews indicate that the local ethos of this restaurant is recognised and valued as a decided attraction of the establishment.

For instance, Tolra noted, “Kudos too for the food-miles consciousness and consideration of sustainability. It’s more than just talk: chef Ingo Meissner adheres to a seasonal food policy and curates a roof-top herb garden” (2014). Another stated:

Heirloom vegies, “ancient grains”, sustainability, seasonality, a proposed rooftop kitchen garden, and a drop-off point for CERES vegie boxes: The Grain Store sounds like a slow train to downtown hippiedom.

It isn’t. With its farmhouse-chic fitout, it’s part of a new breed of eateries putting sophistication into sustainability and tapping into a global trend of going back to basics. (Rousseau, 2013)
But there is more to their efforts than just being local and sustainable in their restaurant practices. They also have a commitment to engaging their customers in conversations about the fine regional foods and wines and the producers that provide them. It is the appreciation of food that stars in this restaurant, and Melanie and Ingo are committed to educating their stakeholders about food and our food choices. In the interview, Ingo stated he works “to educate our clientele... it just tastes much better and there is not much we need to add ... for me being a chef, it is the food itself, and the need to work with it, and let the produce shine for itself” (pers. comm. 10 December 2014). In another interview Ingo stated, “Our menu is fresh, healthy and I want to be a bit different and a little bit educational as well” (Northover, 2014).

Ingo and Melanie work hard to source the best local food and wines from Victoria’s best producers and they have built relationships which sustain these producers’ livelihoods, but this makes a more complex supply system to manage. Their efforts help ensure sustainability of local economies, in addition to the beautiful, fresh and untainted foods that customers enjoy. But Melanie also described this in terms of a broader vision: “with the focus on having local produce you learn more about your own state, take interest in your own state, travel around your state... plus you support local businesses, because that’s what we actually want and we want other people to come and support us as well” (pers. comm. 10 December 2014). This gives an insight into how local food on local restaurant menus can be used as a catalyst to fostering more localised tourism built on solid foundations of food and wine tourism and more holistic local economies that are integrated, self-supporting and sustainable in multiple ways. Demonstrating their commitment to these fine food and wine producers, the Grain Store’s website features a page called “our friends” which highlights the names and details of the people and businesses that provide them with the fine (and in many cases local) ingredients (see http://www.grainstore.com.au/ourfriends).

In terms of the social and community contributions of the Grain Store, it was clear that educating the community about foods and their sourcing and helping to enable access to healthy, local food is a key commitment of Stolpe and Meissner. The Grain Store has had a partnership with CERES Fair Food Organic food suppliers who deliver organic vegetables and produce for pickup, with the Grain Store being the only hosting venue in Melbourne’s CBD (see http://www.ceresfairfood.org.au/).

The Grain Store has been a venue for a number of food events and food symposia; for instance, an event entitled “Food as Medicine” was co-hosted at the Grain Store in 2014 with “Eat Fit Food”. The Grain Store also co-hosts a number of food events with CERES where the membership database of CERES is particularly targeted for thoughtful seminars on food. An example is the 2014 “July Full Moon Dinner: Wintery produce unpredictability” dinner, which was described as “kick[ing] off in The Grain Store’s rooftop garden ... produce for the night will be sourced from Fair Food and there’ll be a talk about gardening by the moon from eloquent bio-dynamic beef farmer, James Sprunt” (CERES Fair Food, 2014). Such
events and activities demonstrate the larger commitment the founders of the Grain Store have to helping people engage with issues of local foods and their sourcing. Of course, it should also be stated that the Grain Store sources some of its fine local ingredients from CERES, in addition to collaborating on informational events at the restaurant.

The Grain Store has a loyal customer base that provides the best marketing for the business: word-of-mouth testimonials. These online reviews provide confirmation that Ingo and Melanie’s efforts have been successful. Such testimonials can be found on Trip Advisor, Yelp and Urbanspoon. For example, one diner from Melbourne commented: “What can I say?! Blown away once more!... a mixture of lovely flavors and freshness. Keep it up grain store! I love their mixture of high quality, nutrition and presentation standards, at the same time there is a comforting simplicity of style and flavor! I look forward to going back” (Urbanspoon, 2015).

Chef Ingo Meissner concluded, “it's been a great learning curve for us, to make those decisions ourselves and ... getting the reward by returning customers; that’s the main thing” (pers. comm. 10 December 2014).

References


Working together for a stronger future … some concluding thoughts

In this section of the report we summarise our findings on sustainable cafés and restaurants. We also offer some thoughts on the challenges faced by restaurateurs trying to implement sustainable practices and provide suggestions on how sustainability efforts could be enhanced further in the restaurant sector.

This project was undertaken to discover and then share the initiatives of leading restaurateurs and chefs who are implementing sustainability in the restaurant sector. We found that restaurateurs of sustainable eateries were challenging how and where social change is traditionally fostered. This report tells the stories of these sustainable cafés and restaurants, and outlines their food practices and engagement strategies, allowing us to reflect on the politics of food and sustainability. The stories of these emerging leaders that have been included here provide a snapshot of how their life trajectory, perspectives and their organisations’ learning experiences have shaped their commitment to and visions for sustainability. The findings from of our sample of 20 case studies of sustainable restaurants and cafés from Adelaide, Goolwa and Melbourne illustrate different facets of sustainability initiatives on fostering learning, engagement and change among their stakeholders. There was much useful learning from each sustainable restaurant and café and we have attempted here to summarise them in a table (see Table 1).

This research project has confirmed that there are significant changes taking place in this dynamic restaurant and café sector and consumers are supportive of the sustainable practices that are being initiated. There are various restaurant initiatives and certification programs that have been developed, to help restaurants to track activities based on the three pillars of sustainability: economic benefits, environmental protection and social responsibility. Innovative environmental practices and creative uses of the potential of the café as a social space are strikingly evident, but the key challenge is ensuring the restaurant
## Sustainability in restaurants and cafes

*As captured by Research Interviews*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predominantly Environmental</th>
<th>Restaurant</th>
<th>Cafe</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eco-design building elements</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location in heritage building</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location in cooperative, eco- or affordable housing</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy saving initiatives (e.g. solar panels)</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water saving initiatives (e.g. rain water)</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing (some) own garden produce</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local sourcing (seasonal)</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local and/or greens supply chain</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of native Australian ingredients</td>
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<td>P</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic foods (full or partial menu)</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing waste / low waste (general)</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing food waste (e.g. donating food)</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small menu (to reduce waste, use in-season foods)</td>
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<td>P</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling (general)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recycling fascias and/or fixtures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced or eco-packaging and/or bottling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced food miles focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composting on site / worm farm / composting club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of &quot;rejected&quot; foods</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Predominantly Economic</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair pricing / affordable food philosophy</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philanthropy (food and/or time donations)</td>
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<td>E</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment opportunities for youth / disadvantaged</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Transitional labour market program</td>
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<tr>
<td>On the job training or certified training opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer labour</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving donations or relies on grants</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partners with or supports like-minded businesses</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accredited by relevant associations</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A unique cuisine or business element</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predominantly Social</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible and welcoming to all / diverse populations</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra provision for special dietary requirements</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close relationships with stakeholders</td>
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<td>Embedded in local community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community interest at heart</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra work towards creating a sense of place</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports local artists and/or musicians</td>
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<td>P</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cafe as a social forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community education initiatives (e.g. cooking classes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching sustainability elements to patrons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educating staff about sustainability</td>
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<td>Good PR for sustainability actions (e.g. social media)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serves as a model for other businesses</td>
<td>P</td>
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<tr>
<td>Animal welfare ethics (e.g. vegetarian or free range)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping the homeless</td>
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<td>Fair trade</td>
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<td>P</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and assessment of sustainability</td>
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*As captured by Research Interviews Total: 369*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Summary of sustainability practices from interviewed restaurants and cafes</th>
<th>Colour Key</th>
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<th>P Prominent</th>
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<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>P</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- **P:** Prominent
- **E:** Emerging
can deliver quality food and sustain economic viability while fulfilling its social goals and environmental responsibilities. For small- and medium-sized enterprises, this is not without difficulties; some of the barriers they face and trade-offs they have to make include the following:

- Environmental improvements often have high upfront and operational costs (for example, time taken for composting and recycling) and the financial gain takes time.
- There are limited resources available and time and effort are required to develop in-house expertise for sustainability. For SMEs that are dependent on the commitment of an individual or couple of key people, this can be quite an obstacle.
- Competition from big players dominates the terms of operating and trading in the sector. There are considerable market tensions due to the duopoly of supermarkets and global franchises.
- Education and resources are both required; there is a steep learning curve for restaurateurs to learn about sustainability and a strong commitment is needed. To be effective, restaurateurs need to educate and engage all stakeholders – staff, suppliers and customers. Embedding sustainability actions into the workplace culture is difficult given its resource-intensive nature, dependence on casual labour, high labour turnover, and high wage costs. This resource-intensive nature may negatively impact financial gains.
- Continuous review of performance and ongoing improvements are necessary. Lack of time and resources to gather statistics and data makes it difficult to apply for and secure industry accreditations.
- Sustainable eateries are often confronted with the trade-off of having to balance what’s affordable and pragmatic with visions of sustainability: as one restaurateur said “affordable sustainability can be modelled by example, without being too purist and rigid”. For example, solar power is desirable but due to infrastructure cost it may not be affordable.
- Partnering with sustainable suppliers may increase business costs because if consumer demand is not yet strong enough, each level of the supply chain is likely to charge a premium for sustainable products and services as they supply niche markets and/or operate on smaller scales with potentially less cost savings available.
- Innovation is needed to maintain both competitiveness and sustainability while also being responsive to customer demand by offering quality and value-added products and services to ensure the business remains competitive.
- The desire to balance different sustainability objectives can bring difficult decisions regarding where to invest funds. For example, restaurateurs may need to decide whether to invest in environmental certification, independent environmental campaigns, or local community campaigns, when each may bring different financial returns (or even losses).
- Investing significant amounts of one’s time on the planning and contribution to local events or sustainability initiatives is another investment that can be seen to compete with time available to spend on one’s own business planning and development.
- Government regulations can often impede the kinds of sustainability initiatives that could be taken (as illustrated, for example, by Joost Bakker’s decision to close Brothl
due to the disagreement with the local council about the site of the zero waste composter on site).

- Greenwashing adversely affects sustainable eateries’ competitiveness by luring away consumers who are not critically aware or rigorous in their assessment of genuine efforts towards sustainability. They could also make consumers mistrustful and reluctant towards cafés and restaurants that are truly sustainable.

The above is not an exhaustive list as there are other barriers and solutions to sustainable practices (see Freeman, 2011). We have observed that managing the complexity of ecology, economy and society is very difficult and the choices that must be made have long reaching consequences which may cause disagreements among stakeholders on strategy and best practice.

From what we have learned from this study we recommend the following initiatives that would help advance the sustainability aspects of the restaurant and café sector:

1. When possible, focus on an eco-design. Design the restaurant and its fit-out to take advantage of natural heating, cooling and lighting. Choose building materials carefully; for example, use recycled materials and those with low embodied energy to reduce harmful health effects and minimise waste and environmental impact. A restaurant that is modelling this is STREAT’s McKillop Street café and its Cromwell property development plan (see http://interfaceconstructions.com.au/).

2. Consider energy reduction. Reduce power consumption by using energy efficient appliances and lighting, turning off appliances not in use and being conscious of practices. When possible, use renewable energy systems in the enterprise, or if not possible, consider purchasing green energy.

3. Establish waste reduction measures, for example a closed loop system for zero waste using the four “Rs” philosophy of rethink, reduce, re-use and recycle (see Brothl’s zero waste composter systems and Mesa Verde’s worm farm). Other examples include menu planning to include limited items that involve “daily specials”, and portion control (see, for example, Sarah’s Sister’s “plat du jour” and Brothl’s use of “rejected” food from other restaurants, such as leftover meat offcuts and bones, to make nutritious broth). Other ways in which waste can be reduced include biodegradable packaging (see, for example, the Organic Market and Café), customers bringing their own coffee cup, and straws made from bamboo.

4. Be diligent about efficient water usage and reducing the quantity consumed (for example, install half flush toilets and dishwashers that are water efficient), and improving water quality by managing stormwater and wastewater.

5. Assess the carbon footprint and emission. Consider reducing food miles by focusing on local and/or green supply chains. Sustainable associations and associated programmes would be able to provide more information on this aspect.

6. There is a huge learning curve for restaurateurs to understand sustainable restaurant practice. Sustainability involves a long-term commitment to investing
time, effort and resources. Looking at what others are doing and taking the initiative, and obtaining sustainable industry association certification may be an important part of this process.

7. Share sustainability practices with patrons as a pathway to fostering greater engagement with sustainability imperatives. For example, strategic placement of sustainability technologies and resources (for example, Broth’s composter, Café Troppo’s barter board), providing public talks on food (for example, the Grain Store and Sarah’s Sister’s), including information on the menu about the restaurant’s mission (for example, Charcoal Lane and STREAT), and explaining the nutritional value of the food on the menu (for example, Motherduck) are all good examples of what can be done. Some of the establishments we studied have started sharing with patrons the full provenance of the meal ingredients. We view this as an effective point of difference, thinking creatively about showcasing the producers, when possible highlighting the local provisioning, and emphasising the health benefits, local economy spin-offs and community building such local sourcing can offer; arguably this is a key selling point in the future of the restaurant sector as consumers become more concerned about where their food comes from. This is seen in Sarah’s Sister’s wine events, Locavore’s practices and the Grain Store’s engagement with CERES. Getting the message to customers about the good things that restaurateurs do is important, as in any business venture, and this is where the sustainability modelling of the restaurant can be used not only for effective marketing but also as a tool for sustainability education and catalyst to wider transformations.

8. Harness marketing and educational opportunities and activities such as presenting public talks, authoring recipe books, working with educational institutions and using new audio-visual platforms, as well as other activities using both social and conventional media. In the venue space, be sure to consider signage, displays of customer letters, art and decorations which convey the sustainable ethos of the business.

9. Source local and seasonal food. Offering a menu containing organics and home grown produce can all have economic and environmental benefits. Produce grown in or nearby restaurants can also serve as a space for social interaction, passive heating and cooling, and aesthetic appeal. For example, Mesa Verde’s rooftop garden grows a lot of food in vertical gardens and blankets the walls with greenery, while also providing a space for staff to socialise; Charcoal Lane gets recipe inspiration from seasonal bush foods, which in turn helps the Indigenous food suppliers.

10. Conduct a financial viability assessment. While “profitable sustainability” is possible restaurateurs should not only focus on sustainability practices that are limited to yielding profit maximisation. Our research shows that customers are willing to support those leading the sustainability movement and sustainable restaurants often stand out due to their leading practices, which offers them a competitive advantage. The goal should be long-term gain by building an ethical reputation.
11. Engage a professional with good financial skills for business planning. This is essential for sustainable enterprises that choose to move beyond a narrow focus on business profits in their enterprise. The ability to offer a menu based on fair pricing and an affordable food philosophy is not easy in the difficult financial conditions of today and must be underpinned by sound planning.

12. Find creative ways of accessing financial resources, particularly social enterprises operating in the restaurant sector. Our case businesses, for example, sourced finances for innovative ventures through government grants and subsidies, civil sector funding, community fundraising and media events, and match-funding opportunities (for example, see Pozible, n.d.):

13. Food that is served with integrity can be value adding and provide a competitive edge. The social sustainability aspect of helping the community and the disadvantaged can have ripple effects of also helping with the economic sustainability aspect. For example, Lentil as Anything employs and trains refugees and migrants, Charcoal Lane employs and trains disadvantaged Indigenous youth, and Etica has established strong animal welfare ethics; all of these restaurants have generated a loyal customer base as a result.

14. Be responsive to customer demands by offering quality and value-added products and services. This will ensure competitiveness in a changing market while still contributing to sustainability principles (for example, offer cooking classes, sell star products, provide educational seminars, organise for customers to meet the maker/producer/vigneron). Stirling Organic Café and Market, for example, with its adjoining organic market and electric vehicle re-charging station extends the value of the core business. Alliances or working in partnership with other businesses can be another initiative; see for example, Mesa Verde’s movie meal deal, and STREAT’s coffee card to Salvation Army customers.

15. Make use of nearby attractions and aim to fit in with the culture of a locality; for example, Lentil as Anything’s Abbotsford Convent venue is located in an important arts, learning and cultural precinct in Melbourne. It is also situated in the same building that houses the Good Shepherds’ Convent social justice network and is in close proximity to the Collingwood Children’s Farm and Slow Food Farmers’ market.

16. Provide a social space for community building. We live in a society characterised by increasing individualism and isolation. People are increasingly seeking social hubs where they can connect with other people and engage in social activities. Lentil as Anything is an example where such community building activities are taking place through its communal seating arrangements, collegial atmosphere, opportunities for refugees to interact with residents, space for various clubs and group activities, and mocktail bar where teenagers who do not consume alcohol could meet to socialise.

17. Treat staff fairly and support their development. Advancing their employment and educational development through training and qualifications are important aspects of social sustainability. In our findings, staff are essential communicators of the
restaurant’s sustainability initiatives and practices and ensuring that they are engaged and committed to the restaurant’s sustainability ethos is essential to success. In a sector that features hard work and stressful situations, concern for staff well-being is also an essential commitment for a sustainable restaurant.

18. Build good long-term relationships with mutual benefits with suppliers, and establish fair prices and agreed terms.

19. Show care towards customers by fostering healthy eating and catering for their nutritional needs, engaging in responsible marketing and providing accurate information about the sourcing and preparation of the food.

20. Finally, we urge all stakeholders to begin to recognise the restaurant sector as a key partner in transitions to sustainability and enabling their full engagement with the array of sustainability initiatives possible. The restaurant sector itself, government at all levels, business associations, civil society organisations, supply chain stakeholders and consumers should all be harnessed in this effort.

The above is by no means a comprehensive list of all the initiatives that the restaurants and cafés in our sample were practicing nor the practices that we could recommend for best outcomes, but they do provide ideas of what is feasible to begin with. It can be concluded that restaurants and cafés are initiating wider social change in relation to plate, planet, people, profit, politics and culture, by striving towards balancing the triple bottom line of sustainability through thoughtful use of resources in terms of sourcing, production, provision and processing of wastage. While most enterprises in our study are striving to gain a balance between the triple bottom line aspects of sustainability this has not always been easy to achieve and trade-offs are unavoidable.

The sustainability aspects of the restaurants ranged from providing healthy food and nutrition insights to customers, educating about environmental impacts to stakeholders, fostering models of zero waste, embodying the locavore movement, developing social enterprises to address social deprivation, addressing food equity and fair trade, fostering social connections, creating awareness of animal welfare, and establishing workers’ co-operative structures. Although there are diverse foci here, they all confirm that a restaurant can be used as a model or tool for transformation towards sustainability. Most of the restaurants we studied had more than one element out of the three elements of social, economic and environmental sustainability. However, their success depends on working together with others such as government regulatory authorities, industry associations, suppliers, staff, customers and the media. Even though it is the environmental management practices of restaurants and cafés that often seem to be flagged, we found that the restaurants and cafés we studied also had a strong social sustainability aspect. Yet, publicity given for these social sustainability aspects appeared to be weaker. Further efforts are needed to raise greater awareness among the consumer market and industry sector so that such important efforts and initiatives can gain the support they so clearly deserve.
This report has only begun the important effort to understand and document what is occurring in this dynamic and exciting restaurant sector space. We hope this will inspire further research into this sector as restaurants’ contributions to transitions to sustainability are a key component to changing our food cultures so that they nurture us all for a very long time to come.

References
Contact details for the sustainable cafés case studies

Adelaide restaurants
Café Troppo
Location: 42 Whitmore Square Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: (08) 8211 8812
Email: café@café.troppo.com.au
Website: http://cafétroppoadelaide.com/

Co-op Coffee Shop
Location: 129 Currie Street Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: 0413 232 940
Email: coopcoffeeshop@gmail.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/coopcoffeeshop
Twitter: @coopcoffeeshop

Etica
Location: 125 Gilles Street Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: (08) 7324 4215
Email: info@eticapizzeria.com.au
Website: http://www.eticapizzeria.com.au/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Etica-ethical-pizzeria-e-mozzarella-bar/239583162796097

Experience Café
Location: 13 Hutt St Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: 0487 209 585
Website: http://www.experiencecafé.org/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TheExperienceCafé

Goodlife Modern Organic Pizza
Three Locations: 170 Hutt St Adelaide SA 5000; 5/11 O'Connell St North Adelaide SA 5066; and Level 1, 42 Jetty Road Glenelg SA 5045
Phone: (08) 8223 2618
Email: admin@goodlifepizza.com
Website: http://www.goodlifepizza.com/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/GoodLifeModernOrganicPizza
Twitter: #GoOdLife @GoodLifeADL

Locavore
Location: 1/49 Mount Barker Road Stirling SA 5152
Phone: (08) 8339 4416
Website: http://www.locavore.com.au/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Locavore-Adelaide-Hills/171248639564443
Nove on Luce
Location: 9 Light Square Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: (08) 8321 9973
Email: admin@coastlands.org.au
Website: http://www.9lightsq.com.au/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/NoveonLuce?fref=photo

Organic Market and Café
Location: 5 Druid Ave Stirling SA 5152
Phone: (08) 8339 4835
Email: organics@ozemail.com.au
Website: http://www.organicmarket.com.au/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/organicmarketandcafe?_rdr

Red Lime Shack
Location: Port Mall, 158 St Vincent Street Port Adelaide SA 5015
Phone: (08) 7226 6867
Email: redlimeshack@gmail.com
Website: http://redlimeshack.blogspot.com.au/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/RedLimeShack

Sarah’s Sisters Sustainable Café
Location: 117 Semaphore Road Semaphore SA 5019
Phone: (08) 8449 5817
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sarahs-Sisters-Sustainable-Café/102891273088757
Twitter: Stuart Gifford@sarahssisters

Goolwa South Australia
Bombora
Location: Beach Rd Goolwa Beach SA 5214
Phone: (08) 8555 5396
Email: bombora-goolwa@live.com.au
Website: http://www.bomboragoolwa.com/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/bomboragoolwa

Motherduck Café
Location: 1/13 Cadell Street Goolwa SA 5142
Phone: (08) 8555 1462
Email: motherduckcafe@gmail.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/motherduckcafe
Rankines at the Whistlestop Café
Location: 7 Hays St Goolwa SA 5142
Phone: (08) 8555 1171
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Rankinesthe-Whistle-Stop-Café-Bar-Restaurant/146814495360298

The Australasian Circa 1858
Location: 1 Porter Street Goolwa SA 5214
Phone: (08) 8555 1088
Email: australasian1858@bigpond.com
Website: http://www.australasian1858.com/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/australasiancirca1858

Melbourne
Brothl (note ceased trading as Brothl March, 2015)
Location: 123 Hardware Street Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9600 0588
Email: info@byjoost.com
Website: http://byjoost.com/

Charcoal Lane
Location: 136 Gertrude St Fitzroy VIC 3065
Phone: (03) 9418 3400
Email: eat@charcoallane.com.au
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/CharcoalLane
Twitter: Charcoal Lane @ CharcoalLane

Lentil as Anything
Locations: multiple in Melbourne and Sydney (see http://lentilasanything.com/)
Contact: http://lentilasanything.com/contact/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/lentilasanything
Blog: http://lentilasanything.com/blog/

Mesa Verde
Location: Curtin House, Level 6, 252 Swanston St Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9654 4417
Email: hello@mesaverde.net.au
Website: http://www.mesaverde.net.au/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/mesa.verde.melbourne
STREAT
Location: 673 Bourke St Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9629 4222
Email: info@streat.com.au
Website: https://www.streat.com.au/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/streatmelbourne
Twitter: STREAT@STREATMelbourne

The Grain Store
Location: 517 Flinders Lane Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9972 6993
Email: info@grainstore.com.au
Website: http://grainstore.com.au/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/grainstore517

Relevant Industry Associations

The Sustainable Table
Cassie Duncan, Co-Founder and General Manager
Address: PO Box 93 Clifton Hill VIC 3068
Phone: (03) 8644 4050
Email: info@sustainabletable.org.au
Website: http://www.sustainabletable.org.au/

Cittaslow Goolwa
Lyn Clark, President
Address: PO Box 2539 Goolwa SA 5214
Phone: (08) 8555 5801
Email: president@cittaslowgoolwa.com.au
Website: http://www.cittaslowgoolwa.com.au/

Green Table (Restaurant and Catering Association Australia)
John Hart, Chief Executive Officer
Address: PO Box 121 Surry Hills NSW 2010
Phone: 1300 722 878
Website: http://www.restaurantcater.asn.au/

Sustainable Restaurant Association
Mark Linehan, Managing Director
Address: 25 Gerrard Street London W1D 6JL United Kingdom
Phone: +44 020 7479 4224
Email: hello@thesra.org
Website: http://www.thesra.org/
Researcher details

Dr Freya Higgins-Desbiolles is a Senior Lecturer in Tourism with the School of Management at the University of South Australia. She has held concerns with sustainable futures since working in the development sector and in her tourism research she has examined special-interest tourism, tourism policy and planning, and the politics of tourism.

Dr Gayathri Wijesinghe is a Lecturer in Tourism with the School of Management at the University of South Australia. She has been interested in workforce ethics and sustainability since working in the hospitality industry and in her research she has examined issues relating to front line employee experiences in providing hospitality service.

Dr Emily Moskwa is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of South Australia. Her recent research has focused on understanding stakeholder perceptions and expectations of land management and sustainability advocacy within a tourism context.
Can Cafés and Restaurants Save the World?

Look inside!

“This report is an important read for anyone who eats out; actually, for anyone who eats. For those wishing to learn more about how to define sustainability in the context of a food business and about how ethically-minded organisations are working to shape a food culture that takes into account more than just price, then this report is for you” - Cassie Duncan, Co-founder and General Manager of Sustainable Table