



BRISBANE BUYERS CLUB CAMPAIGN



**THANK YOU
UBUNTU FOUNDATION**

INTRODUCTION

GUIDE

In June 2022, the Ubuntu Foundation made a donation in the sum of \$25,000 to support the Food Connect Foundation, a not-for-profit registered charity working to transform the food system, to create a campaign to grow community-based ethical food buying groups.

Thanks to this generous support, we've been able to deliver a successful campaign to encourage neighbours and friends to take practical action.

This report outlines the impact of Ubuntu Foundation's contribution to helping communities engage more meaningfully with their local food system, and by doing so, take direct action on climate change, improve people's health and create connected communities.

Food Connect Foundation wishes to acknowledge the traditional custodians, past and present, of the Aboriginal Nations of South East Queensland. We respect their wisdom and rich history as the original owners, farmers, and community builders of these lands and waters.

BACKGROUND

The Food Connect Foundation (FCF) is a not-for-profit registered charity committed to creating a new regenerative food system.

With a vision of

a world where everyone has access to fresh, healthy food that's fair to growers, eaters and the planet,

we establish and nurture initiatives that make it possible. We pilot social enterprises, support growers, and promote conscious food choices through advice, advocacy, education and events.

FCF was founded in 2009 to build upon the previous five years of work that its social enterprise, Food Connect had done connecting consumers with local growers in South East Queensland.

For over 18 years, Food Connect delivered both retail boxes and wholesale orders to customers seeking a deeper connection to their local food system.

Wholesale orders were mainly delivered to bulk buyers clubs and food co-ops for over 15 years, and while there was strong word of mouth and mutual sharing of knowledge, the lack of a cohesive resource and awareness campaign presented barriers for others to start their own groups.

BACKGROUND



Buyers Clubs are created from a belief that communities have an important role to play in building resilient food systems and encouraging healthy, place-based connections with others. Food Connect's wholesale enterprise served over 20 buyers clubs across South East Queensland, and current rapid changes (crises!) experienced by householders and communities provide an opportunity to grow the number of food groups across our bioregion to promote food sovereignty and foster disaster and economic resilience.

Running like a smaller, and often more tightly knit co-op, buyers clubs help to enhance:

- Social collaboration and community bonds
- Understanding of local food systems, circular economies and reducing waste and plastics
- Homesteading and preserving skills
- Autonomy and Agency in designing what their community wants
- A sense of purpose and participation
- Nutritional literacy

Buyers Clubs become a key part of the social fabric for many of their members. Many have told us that joining one has helped them find a sense of belonging in a new city, overcome isolation during COVID, open their eyes to a new admiration for regional farmers and more.


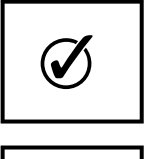
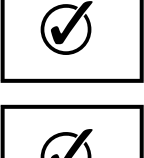
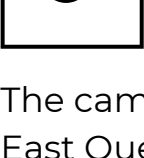
They also serve to democratise the food system, making high-quality, healthy, fresh food more accessible across the community, while fairly rewarding the farmers and makers (both socially and financially).



CAMPAIGN OUTCOMES

The Food Connect Foundation embarked on a new campaign to promote and nurture more Buyers Clubs in South East Queensland.

A number of activities were undertaken, including:

-  **workshops and interviews with existing Buyers Groups, farmers and relevant stakeholders to share knowledge and information about setting up a group, and engaging directly with suppliers**
-  **the creation of a beautiful, downloadable Bulk Buyers Guide designed to ensure easy, step by step instructions for anyone to access for free**
-  **a celebratory event to officially launch the guide at the Food Connect Shed**
-  **communicate impact of buyers groups - public relations, media outreach and social media amplification**

The campaign identified over 40 buyers groups of various sizes across South East Queensland, and with an average of 20 members / households. This constitutes over 800 people being directly involved in small, ethical food buying initiatives. Over 20 growers and food makers were also identified as benefitting directly from doing business with buyers groups.

The launch event of the guide on 30 July 2023, attracted over 70 participants and included a presentation by Rob Pekin from the Food Connect Foundation, followed by a panel discussion of three community leaders currently participating in buyers groups. Audience members were given the opportunity to participate in a Question and Answer session, which provided some great insights into practical ways to get started and maintain member engagement.

The event also featured a mini-trade show with eight growers and makers selling their produce and products.

[Click here to access the guide](#)

BULK BUYING INFO SESSION

with special guest, Costa Georgiadis

3:30PM, SUNDAY 30 JULY



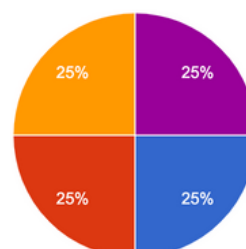
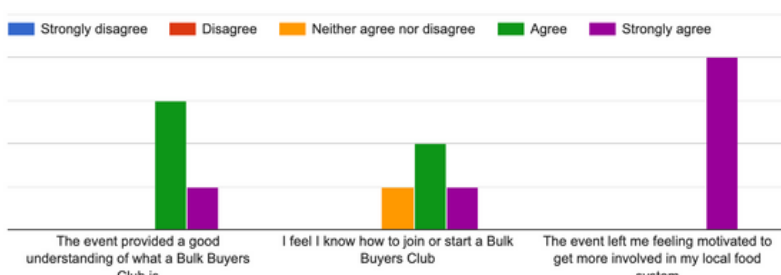
EVALUATION

Across our engagement activities, participants were asked for feedback to improve our understanding of barriers to starting a group and effectiveness of our engagement.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with the majority of participants feeling motivated to get more involved in their local food system. The campaign also attracted positive media attention, including an interview on ABC Brisbane radio's Rebecca Levingstone's morning show prior to the launch event, and coverage in the Weekend Edition.

While the launch event was to feature Costa Georgiadis from ABC's Gardening Australia, he had to withdraw at the last minute due to being required to attend the Logies. However, he generously provided a video to encourage attendees to participate in buyers groups.

Current website statistics indicate that the Guide has been downloaded 89 times since the launch event.



- I'm already part of one
- I plan to start a new group
- I want to join an existing group
- I don't think bulk buying is for me
- I'm not sure yet!



*"The panel was great.
Good to meet farmers and
mingle too"*

*"great to see food
communities coming
together"*

