



Benalla Local Food Network Meeting: Wednesday 17th March 4-5pm- Benalla Ray Sweeney Centre 45 Coster St

Attendees: Peter Maddock, Heath Whiley, Bev Lee, Callum Morrison, Kathryn McQualter

Apologies: Larissa Montgomery

1. What is happening in Benalla?

3.1 Food policy Advocacy

- The North East Local Food Strategy 2018-2022:
https://gatewayhealth.org.au/images/brochures/NE_Local_Food_Strategy_2018_2022.pdf
- Indigo Shire Council have a Local Food Policy (first for the region). Presented by Mayor Cr Jenny O'Connor at the recent Benalla Sustainable Future Group Climate Change talk
- The Open Food Network (Serenity Hill) have employed several "local food activators". A part of activator roles is getting a detailed picture of the needs of enterprises (support needs; infrastructure etc; govt barriers) that we can then present to individual councils. There is one in Beechworth (TBC) and Wangaratta (Eva Eriksson). The coordinator is Sophia Christoe and Megan Roberts. Two activation roles have also been filled in Gippsland. [Welcome to Open Food Network](#)

Open Road Project: Pilot of food transport loop around the north east Vic, Barwon, Hume and Gippsland. There will be producer pick-ups and box drop-offs on Thur and Fri in Hume, we will run one big Hume loop on Mondays (synchronised with other loops) that will meet up with the central loop and get to Melb late Tues. We are working with Melbourne Farmers Markets and CERES and others about drop off hubs in Melbourne/options for markets (eg MFM will be operating a staffed mid week market on wed that will link in with these loops).

Loop Draft:
(Bright to Beechworth feeder run)
Beechworth
Rutherglen
Wodonga
Wangaratta
King Valley
Barjarg
Benalla



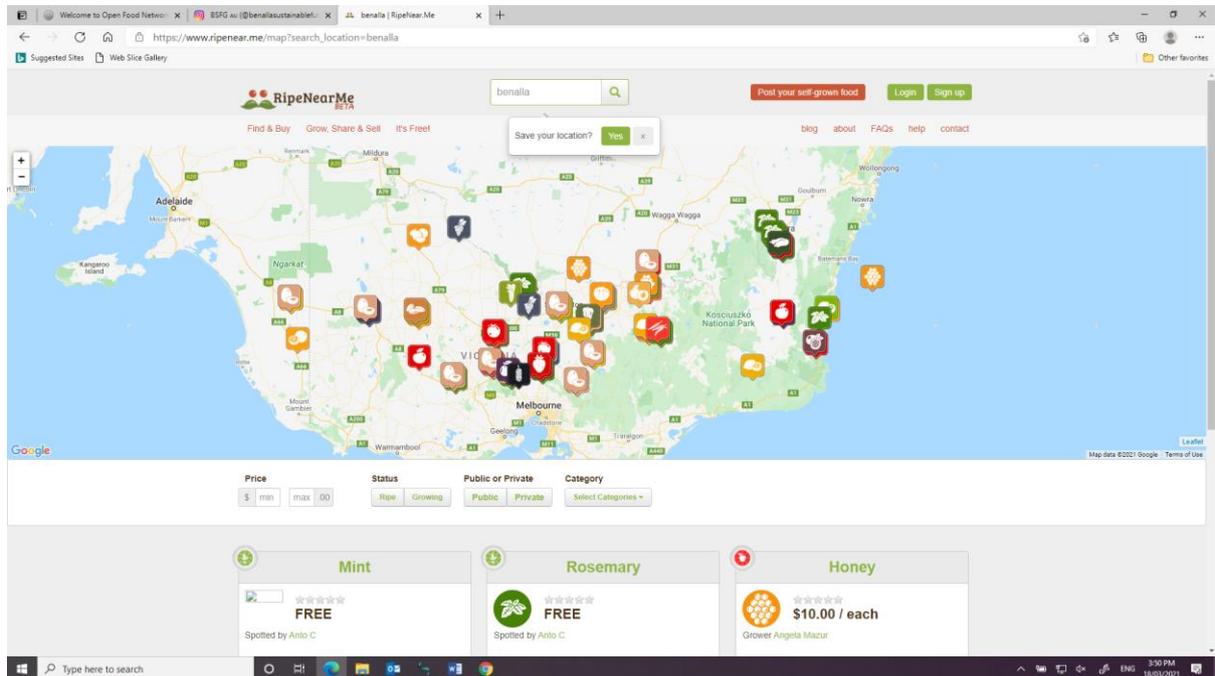
(then Melb via Central loop which includes Seymour and happens on a Tues).

Things to think about

- 1) Producer or other enterprises that we should be targeting with engagement/assistance with the local food activation resources (other than the partner hubs and their existing networks)
- 2) Ideas for sites/partners for hubs to enable producer pick-ups in the places other than Wang and Beechworth (we have ideas about these but March will be the month for getting this all pinned down so ideas/partnerships welcome!) In the loop pilot we are aiming for boxes not necessarily pallets (yet) so hubs can be enabled with portable coolroom and lock up shed at minimum (not covered by our current budgets). Open Road hub sites have automatic access/delivery of produce from the rest of the network and this would be an ideal opportunity to help "activate" new projects at these locations.

3.2 Support Local Food Activities

- Discussed Idea of a food swap to help with excess produce
Could be at old Vic Hotel Bottle O drive through. Could also start up as part of the Benalla Food Coop e.g. sharing table. Callum advised to keep dirty crops separate e.g. potatoes. Kathryn has a green food cart to use for a food swap (unable to be used at hospital due to COVID 19 restrictions).
- Discussion on biogas –there are restaurants in Melbourne using this. Callum has calculated biogas can be created from 4 houses to supply gas for 1 house.
- Heath has been updating the Benalla Sustainable Future Group Instagram page. This has been very popular. [BSFG AU \(@benallasustainablefuturegroup\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)
- Online platforms available to share excess food. Ripe Near me- an online platform to sell/give away free food. Web based platform <https://www.ripenear.me/>



- **NEW:** Acres and Acres is a community market garden that has started in Corryong. <https://acresandacres.com.au/> The mission is to create a network of Market Gardens across the Upper Murray and North East Victoria, to build resilience through the production of fresh produce across the local area.
- **NEW:** Waminda Neighbourhood House have set up a drop in food pick up, in partnership with Second Bite. Running On Thursday mornings.
- Benalla Grow Your Own- wicking garden beds. Will be delivery seedlings to families again in school holidays (Autumn April 2021) with St Vincent de Paul Society of Benalla.
- Benalla Central Community Garden: Working bees started again in 2021. See facebook group for details. <https://www.facebook.com/Benalla-Central-Community-Garden-106810107405039/>
- Delivery of fruit and veg boxes- Fruits N Fare, Good Vibes Wholefoods Store- Balaji and Karthika
- Benalla Food Coop (Benalla Sustainable Future Group) <https://www.bsfg.org.au/benalla-food-co-operative.html>