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Topic: The impact of food systems on nutrition, diet and health

Title: Building resilience into Tasmania's emerging local food economy to improve community access to health food

Presentation Type: Oral

Introduction

Tasmania has a reputation for growing the best quality food in Australia, but paradoxically has some of the worst health outcome in the country. A recent study suggests that the existing food system isn't delivering what communities want, because ready and liable physical access to affordable healthy food is difficult to access depending on where you live. This project is part of a broader initiative, Healthy Food Access Tasmania, led by the Heart Foundation.

Methods

Researchers have taken a snapshot of Tasmania's current food system by interviewing 64 key stakeholders, from 5 stakeholder groups, across 3 regions of Tasmania, from producers through to consumers. The semi-structured interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis approach and key themes were identified. The research explores opportunities and challenges for strengthening new and existing local food systems with a specific focus on fruit and vegetables.

Results

Findings suggest that a successful local food system needs to Strengthen the existing system/s; Get local governments involved; Address the broader social determinants of health; Not take a one-size-fits-all approach; Engage consumers to support the needs of the market; Make incremental changes; and Involve smaller to medium size growers and community groups.

Conclusions

While local food systems could play a pivotal role in strengthening the local economy in Tasmania there is misconception amongst stakeholder groups about the concept of food access and its challenges that needs to be improved. The findings from this

research raise questions of how we build resilience into Tasmania's emerging local food economy.