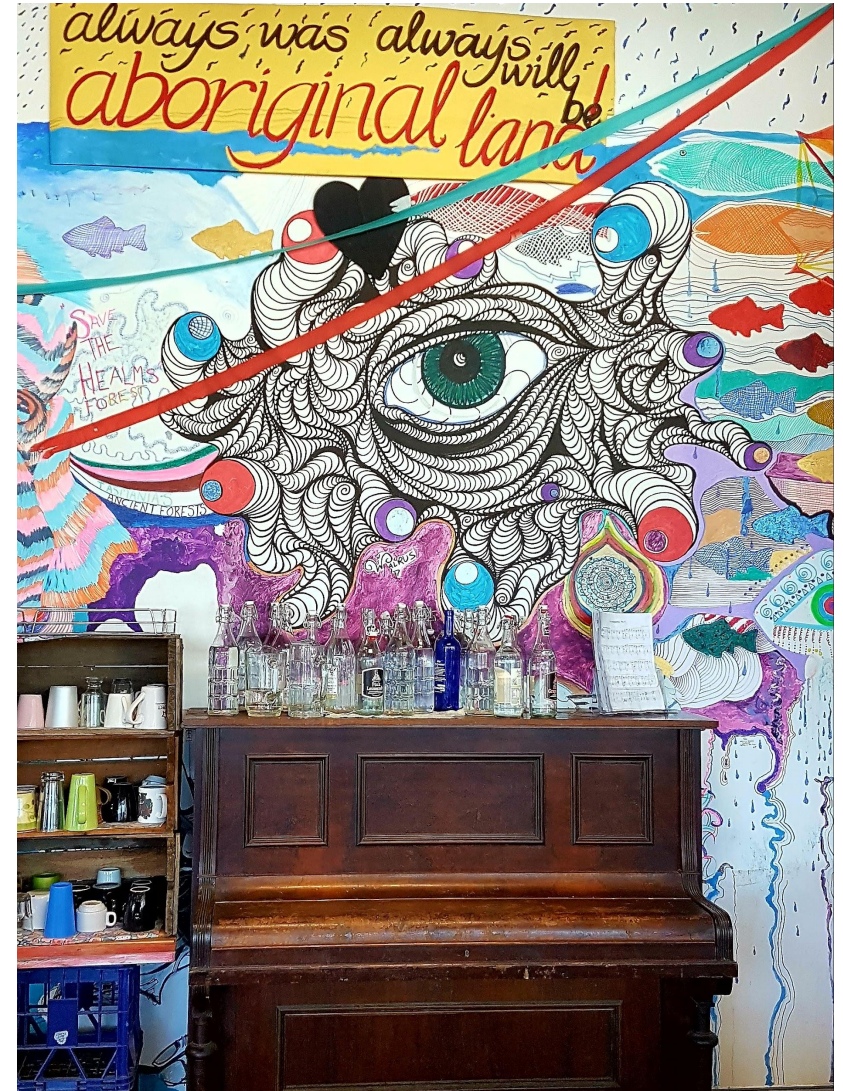




# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

2022 - 2025



## Contents

1. Strategic Plan Overview	2
2. Strategic Planning Process	3
3. Vision, Mission Values and Objectives	4
4. Co-operative Principles	5
5. Strategic Priorities	6

We acknowledge the First Nations that we now occupy, notably the lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people. Through our connections and community, we aim to reassert First Nation sovereignty which was never ceded.

## 1. Strategic Plan Overview

### 1.1 Our History - Who is the Food Co-operative Shop (aka the Food Co-op)?

We are a not-for-profit food co-operative that knows and lives by good food. Our members own the Food Co-op, help run it and in turn receive benefits for their contributions. We hold the title as Australia's oldest food co-operative (est. 1976). Our rich history is a testament to the hard work of our members and community.

Historically the Food Co-op has evolved by seizing opportunities on a reactive basis. Together we have overcome all types of challenges and have grown stronger as a result. Now more than ever is our moment to plan the future we want to create.

### 1.2 Why develop a strategic plan?

We are a volunteer and people driven organisation. Members shape and drive change for the Food Co-op. As many diverse people, we must work together to make progress. The Food Co-op has developed this strategic plan to:

- focus our efforts to work in unison towards our shared direction.
- build a more active, engaged and reciprocal relationship between the Food Co-op and its members.

### 1.3 How do I use this document?

So what did this mean for you? Our strategic plan aims to reflect the best interests of our membership base. As a member we hope our strategic direction inspires you! You can use our strategic plan as a tool to:

- participate in strategic activities that you think are valuable (outlined below)
- assess our transparency, accountability and progress in delivering to our goals.

Our Strategic Plan tells a story about our future direction:

- A. What is the current situation?
- B. Where we would like to see the Food Co-op in 1 to 5 years?
- C. Then what is required to reach our desired destination?

### 1.4 What are the next steps?

This Strategic Plan has been developed for five years. Each year members and the board will come together to review the Strategic Plan and develop an annual plan.

## 2. Strategic Planning Process - how did we develop our strategic plan?

The key to a successful strategic plan is **you**. That is - our Strategic Plan is developed by members, for members. Members and our community will need to drive our Strategic Plan to turn it into reality.

Our Strategic Plan is based on input from members. We developed our original Strategic Plan through:

- A. a workshop with members at the 2015 Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- B. a series of workshops with the Board during 2016-17
- C. a series of member forums in 2017

This updated Strategic Plan (2022-2025) is based on the original Strategic Plan with updates from member input at the 2021 Strategic Planning Workshop.

Our Strategic Plan is the product of these discussions. It outlines our Vision, Mission, Values, Objectives and Strategic Priorities for the next five years.

Through our strategic discussions we captured our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to assess our current situation.

### **STRENGTHS**

- Rich and mature history – respected in the community with over 40 years of experience.
- Committed people - core members are dedicated, staff and customers are loyal, our volunteer base is capable and enthusiastic
- Dynamic space - we are a hub of activity with incredible opportunities for growth through our versatile space
- Active community - we organically foster inclusive and diverse networks
- Healthy culture - we support positive, value-driven and collaborative relationships
- Loved products & services - we deliver valued foods, drinks and activities through our cafe, shop and events.
- New ways of organising - we offer an alternative economic model to profit-driven business
- Tackling social issues - we support diverse & intersectional movements from waste minimisation to feminism & sovereignty for First Nations
- Creative environment - we are innovative and artistic in our work.

## WEAKNESSES

- Staff burnout - Many staff (particularly Co-Managers) work in a demanding environment at an unsustainable level
- Lack of coordinated and integrated communication - our communication systems are multifaceted and not well-connected.
- Lack of volunteer engagement strategy - we do not have a clear, structured nor concerted approach to onboarding volunteers and making the most of their capabilities.
- Transient roles - turnover and changing availabilities for certain roles means we lose capacity and knowledge.
- Lack of an integrated financial model and strategy - We do not have a coherent and targeted approach to our pricing and products. For example lunches are affordable and popular though our shop range is perceived as expensive. Cafe sometimes makes a loss.
- Gaps in outreach - patrons and members do not have a shared understanding our goals and how we work particularly for newcomers.
- “Exclusive” community - we are overly dependent on core members who dominate some activities.
- Difficult shop experience - patrons are unclear on shopping process, bulk products are hard to access (eg bag up) and often lead to spillage - WHS risk, production presentation including prices is inconsistent
- Fragmented Governance - the Food Co-op does not enable and many members do not participate in decision making. This means organisation structure does not necessarily reflect or adapt to needs of members or the organisation.
- Floor layout - the Food Co-op space is not designed and utilized to its full potential. Need to maximise efficiency, functionality and accessibility
- Poor access to parking

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Unique niche - We are the only Food Co-op in the Canberra region
- Competitors – Market competitors create market awareness and opportunities for collaboration
- Market and location - we are surrounded by active patrons - ANU students, public servants, close to the city people
- Local producer relationships - broaden product range and therefore market base. eg vegan and ethical meat
- A Canberra hub - grow as the hub for Canberra communities organisations to meet, network and host events
- Social trends - the community’s appetite and awareness for healthy and sustainable food is growing
- Sharing resources - we have access to many assets that are underutilized. In particular, our members hold diverse expertise that could be used in specialist projects, education or training

## THREATS

- Competitors – Market competitors are developing including bulk food, vegan and zero waste shops
- Food safety / WHS incidents & non-compliance with regulations - may undermine our reputation, legal or financial position.
- Lease expiry - our lease with the ANU / UniLodge is due to expire in 2022. We have no guarantee it will be extended.
- Grievances & workplace conflict - interpersonal issues drain an unreasonable amount of staff and member resources.
- Volatile finances - we fail to adapt to shocks to our income and / or expenses and we do to make a profit.
- Dysfunctional or vulnerable structures - certain committees and roles are disrupted and cannot fulfill their purpose (eg. many people resign at once)

### 3. Vision, Mission Values and Objectives

**Vision:** Food for people, not for profit.

**Mission:** We deliver affordable, ethical and sustainable products in a creative and inclusive environment that minimises waste and realises human potential

#### Values

**COMMITTED:** We are committed to our shared goal and working at our best to deliver results.

**SUSTAINABLE:** We ensure our drive for sustainability sits at the core of our organisation.

**INCLUSIVE:** We demonstrate respect for all and foster diversity as a strength.

**ETHICAL:** We act with honesty and integrity particularly in our relationships to people.

**COMMUNITY:** We appreciate and support our community as the foundation of our organisation.

#### **Objectives:**

1. provide affordable, ethical and sustainable products;
2. grow and maximise member participation in Food Co-op activities;
3. support the production of local produce;
4. foster a supportive and effective environment for our community particularly for employees and members;
5. empower our members and broader community to achieve and develop our Mission and Objectives; and
6. promote environmentally and socially just living.

#### **4. International Co-operative Principles**

We ranked our priorities against the [International Co-operative Alliance](#) principles. These principles are guidelines for how co-operatives turn their values into reality. We explain each principle below.

##### **Member Economic Participation**

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

##### **Voluntary and Open Membership**

Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

##### **Education, Training and Information**

Co-operatives provide education & training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public about the nature & benefits of cooperation.

##### **Democratic Member Control**

Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. People serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

##### **Co-operation among Co-operatives**

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together.

##### **Concern for Community**

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

##### **Autonomy and Independence**

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members.

## 5. Objectives

Our strategies tell us where we need to focus our energy to reach our objectives.

### 1. Provide affordable, ethical and sustainable products

#### Pre-amble?

	Strategy
1.1	Ensure the stability of an affordable space.
1.2	Ensure the product range meets members needs.
1.3	Ensure affordability, consistency and clarity of pricing scheme.
1.4	Adequately communicate product information and pricing.
1.5	Ensure the cafe is aligned with and enlivens co-op values
1.6	Care for and manage produce well to promote its value and avoid waste.

### 2. Grow and maximise member participation in Food Co-op activities

2.1	Develop a volunteer/member-worker engagement strategy for increasing the number and efficacy of working members and including ways to draw on the skill sets of members.
-----	--



2.1 .1	Foster diversity and leadership within the membership base.
2.2	Seek member engagement in key Working Groups and Teams (that may be led by a board member when it relates to core board functions) and distribute the work and decision-making.
2.3	Develop accessible communication methods that enable better transparency for members to be informed and engaged in Food Co-op general business and decisions.

### 3. Support the production of local produce

3.1	Support local.
3.2	Create opportunities for direct member contact with food production.
3.3	Explore opportunities for the rooftop garden as a Food Co-op activity and production.
3.4	Explore alternative economic and certification systems to support production of local produce

### 4. Foster a supportive and effective environment for our community particularly for employees and members

4.1	4.1.1 Foster an organisational structure to support effective functioning of the co-op. 4.1.2 Develop succession plan for key roles 4.1.3 Develop management and communication systems to support effective functioning of this structure.
4.2	Explore alternative organisational structures, including holistic accounting systems

4.3	Maintain an adaptable Return for Labour Policy that is reflective of and incentivises work at the co-op.
4.4	Ensure staff and working members are provided effective and ongoing training.
4.5	Maintain a system to proactively handle harmful behaviour and generate positive relational behaviour in the co-op.
4.6	Maintain cleanliness, beauty & order throughout Co-op.
4.7	Encourage a co-operative and inclusive culture
4.8	Continue engaging with, centring and supporting First Nations people and communities in all aspects of the Co-op
4.9	Develop a cultural policy to improve the participation and celebration of diverse cultural groups in Food Co-op activities
4.10	Develop a policy to support and encourage young people and parents/carers to participate in the Food Co-op
4.11	Develop a strategy to engage with and support vulnerable and disadvantaged communities

## 5. Empower our members and broader community to achieve and develop our Mission and Objectives; and

5.1	Promote the Food Co-op to the broader community to encourage participation and membership.
5.2	Build transparent, accountable and participatory decision-making processes into our operations.
5.3	Facilitate in-house programs, courses and workshops delivered by community members for community members.
5.4	Strengthen relationships with local organisations to identify opportunities for collaboration that furthers our Mission and Objectives.
5.5	Grow our relationships with other cooperatives locally and beyond, to facilitate mutually beneficial initiatives.
5.6	Promote the Food Co-op as a venue space for other organisations in ways that further our Mission and Objectives.

## 6. Foster a well and thriving environmentally and socially just community

6.1	Move towards zero waste.
6.2	Engage in organisational, community and public education and advocacy for issues relating to our objectives
6.3	Support in-house events.
6.4	Foster and develop relationships with aligned organisations.