

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM



Plain Language Statement

Date: May 2025

Full Project Title: Map My Food

Principal Researcher: Cindy Needham

Associate Researcher(s): Dr Jane Jacobs (GLOBE, IHT), Dr Christina Zorbas (GLOBE, IHT), Dr Laura Alston (Deakin Rural Health and Colac Area Health) Dr Tracy Schumacher (University of Newcastle), Penny Fraser (GLOBE, IHT), Dr Ana Horta (Charles Sturt University), Ass Prof Michael Johnstone (IISRI Deakin), Prof Douglas Creighton (IISRI Deakin), Dr Alison Koschel (Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network), Prof Leanne J. Brown (University of Newcastle), Annabelle Williams (Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network), Judy Coates, Gina Vereker (Tamworth Regional Council), Dr Carmen Vargas (GLOBE, IHT), Ass Prof Claudia Strugnell (IPAN, Deakin), Dr Tari Forrester-Bowling (GLOBE, IHT Deakin), Ass Prof Kristy A Bolton (IPAN, Deakin), Prof Steven Allender (GLOBE, IHT, Deakin), Dr Jo Cho (IISRI Deakin), Dr Burhan Khan (IISRI Deakin), Lesley Hendy (GLOBE, IHT, Deakin), Penny Hands (University of Newcastle), Chloe Parkins (University of Newcastle)

Why are we doing Map My Food? Providing equitable access to healthier food in regional and rural areas is really important to support good health. Available research suggests Australians living in rural areas have reduced access to healthy food retail compared to their urban counterparts and that healthier options are more expensive. A collaboration of public health nutrition researchers, health services, primary health networks and local governments across the Australian states of New South Wales and Victoria have secured funding to engage communities in the local government areas of Colac Otway Shire and Tamworth Regional Council through the Australian Medical Research Futures Fund.

Aim of Map My Food: The aim of this community engagement activity is to get a better understanding of how people in these communities get their food, what food they get and the reasons why. We also want to know if there is something you could change to make it easier for you to access healthy food and have a healthy diet, what would it be?

How was Map My Food developed? Map My Food has been developed with the local communities of Colac Otway Shire and Tamworth Regional Council. It is hoped its features will enable an increased number of community members to engage with researchers by removing barriers to participation (e.g., time, location and access to transport). The broad research questions that guide this research are:

- RQ1: How can co-developed digital tools be used to engage rural and remote communities to understand the unique, context specific challenges in accessing food?
- RQ2: How do co-developed digital tools support the co-design of evidence-based initiatives to support rural and remote communities to have healthier diets?

Who can participate? Anyone aged 13 years or older living, in the Colac Otway Shire or Tamworth Regional Council can participate.

What does participation involve? The digital platform Map My Food will guide participants through a series of questions and activities which you can access on a phone, tablet or computer. Map My Food will ask you to provide a little bit of information about you (e.g., gender, age, employment status and education) and approximately where you live on a map using a circular buffer approximately of around 1-5km (this makes sure we can't identify you or your home). We'll also ask you where you work and spend your leisure time (e.g., sport, fishing, walking, movies). You will then be asked to tell us about the two places you go most often to get food, how you get there and how often, and what food you get. An AI-supported sentence-building tool will then help you tell us about your personal experiences, challenges, and perspectives on accessing food and how these things relate to each other. These responses are also structured using the AI-assisted tool to enhance the user experience and make it easier to respond, but remember you always have the option to add in your own response. At the end Map My Food, you'll be asked to select or suggest potential solutions that would help you access healthy food and have a healthy diet. Recruitment progress will be monitored weekly, and strategies will be adapted in real-time based on demographic representation and completion.

Participation is voluntary and will take between 10-15 minutes. You can withdraw at any time if they choose not to complete all activities. However, data entered up until the point of ceasing participation will be stored on the server. We won't collect any personally identifiable information about you. If you want to be updated about the project you will have the option to leave your email address through a separate platform. All information collected through Map My Food will be stored on a secure, password protected, digital platform hosted on Azure servers located in Melbourne, Australia for a minimum of 5 years.

What are the risks? There are minimal potential risks to participants other than the mild inconvenience of participating in the Map My Food activities. The benefits of participating in Map My Food is that key interest-holders and researchers will gain a rich understanding of the lived experience of your community and your ideas to make access to healthy food easier for you so you can have a healthy diet.

Want to know more about the results? Findings from Map My Food will be shared with participants and research partners through a multi-platform approach designed to ensure transparency, accessibility, and engagement. Key results will be summarized and posted on social media channels to reach a broad audience quickly and encourage community dialogue. Print media, such as newsletters and local newspapers, will be used to provide

more detailed updates to those who prefer traditional communication methods. A comprehensive report outlining the survey methodology, key findings, and recommendations will be distributed to stakeholders and made available online that can be utilised by communities and their interest-holders to inform the development of strategies, initiatives and programs; and, to support future grant applications. One-page infographic will also be developed and circulated across communities in sites where recruitment flyers were posted. Your contribution to the Map My Food Project will help build the evidence and knowledge relating to regional and rural communities and how they access food which is currently lacking through publication of this research in national and international peer reviewed journals.

For more information on the Map My Food project please see website link and lead researcher contact details below:

Map My website: <https://iht.deakin.edu.au/project/map-my/>

Principle investigator: Dr Cindy Needham, Deakin University, 1 Gheringhap St, Geelong, Victoria, 3220. E: cindy.needham@deakin.edu.au, Telephone: +61 (3) 5227 3198

NSW Research Team: Dr Tracy Schumacher, University of Newcastle, Department of Rural Health, 114 - 148 Johnston Street, Tamworth NSW 2340, E: Tracy.Schumacher@newcastle.edu.au, Telephone +61 (2) 6755 3560

Complaints

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact:

The Human Research Ethics Office, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, research-ethics@deakin.edu.au

Please quote project number [2025-HE000112].



PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO: Community members of Colac Otway Shire, Victoria

OR

Community members of Tamworth Regional Shire, New South Wales

Consent Form

Date: 2nd May 2025

Full Project Title: Map My Food

Reference Number: 2025-HE000112

I have read and/or listened to the introductory video for Map My Food, and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I freely agree to participate in this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

I have been given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to download and keep and can freely access the introductory video at any time.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal my identity and personal details, including where information about this project is published, or presented in any public form.

Please click below 'yes' if you consent to participate and 'no' if they do not wish to participate when you close this form.

If you choose to withdraw your participation you can do so at any time by exiting the Map My Food tool.