



# FOOD, DIET AND SUSTAINABILITY

## ABOUT ISF

The Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) is a research and consulting organisation at the University of Technology, Sydney. We work with industry, government and the community to help create sustainable futures through research, consultancy and training.

Our excellent reputation across Australia and internationally is for innovative, solution-focused interdisciplinary consultancy projects. The key to our approach is integration and alignment across strategic, tactical and operational activities.

We work in a number of different research areas using a variety of approaches.

This capability statement outlines our expertise in the field of food, diet and sustainability. Capability statements for the other areas we work in are available from our website.

## WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE FOOD?

Sustainable food is roughly defined as food that is produced, processed and traded in ways that: (1) contribute to thriving local economies and sustainable livelihoods; (2) protect the diversity of both plants and animals and the welfare of farmed and wild species and avoid damaging natural resources and contributing to climate change; and (3) provide social benefits to the community such as good quality food, safe and healthy food products and educational and learning opportunities.

## WHAT WE OFFER

Our researchers work with government, business and the wider community to improve the sustainability of our food systems and design effective policies and programs. Some of the services we offer include:

### **Sustainability evaluation**

We can assess the economic, environmental and social sustainability of food systems and food and diet initiatives to inform policy and action. We use a variety of tools and frameworks to guide evaluation, including integrated resource planning and sustainability indicators. We have expertise in resource and food flows analysis, including Australian and global food production, consumption and disposal/reuse systems.



### **Communication**

We undertake research, writing, public speaking and media work in relation to communication of food, diet and sustainability issues. Our work on Network 10's 'National Carbon Test' television program raised public awareness of water and energy issues related to food waste. Our researchers have appeared on television programs such as 'Catalyst' (<http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/food/>) and national news media and online publications.

### **Policy and program development and evaluation**

We have extensive experience in the evaluation of a variety of environmental, energy, water and greenhouse policy initiatives and design of alternative policies to promote sustainability. We provide advice to all levels of government. Our comprehensive knowledge of food policy and practice, combined with our social research skills, ensures that our recommendations are well targeted and effective.

### **Social justice and food equality**

We have specific expertise in consumer advocacy and analysis of social justice issues related to food.

### **Engagement and learning**

We have an extensive track record in the development of educational programs, tools and guidelines that provide our clients and their stakeholders with the capacity to create their own change towards sustainable futures. Our work in this area encompasses community awareness raising and education, public consultation to enhance community involvement, professional development programs and change management programs for private and public sector organisations.

## RECENT PROJECTS

### **Global Phosphorous Research Initiative (GPRI):**

Phosphorous is an essential nutrient for all plants and animals. Yet phosphate rock is a non-renewable resource. The main objective of the GPRI (Global Phosphorous Research Initiative), a joint initiative between ISF and the Department of Water and Environmental Studies at Linköping University, Sweden, is to facilitate quality interdisciplinary research on global phosphorus security for future food security.

### **THINKK Kangaroo Think Tank:**

THINKK is an innovative think tank that has been established to undertake independent research on kangaroos in Australia. The mission of THINKK is to foster understanding amongst Australians about kangaroos in a sustainable landscape, through critically reviewing current kangaroo management practices and exploring non-lethal management methods that are consistent with ecology, animal welfare, human health and ethics.

### **Reducing Meat and Dairy Consumption – A cultural change approach:**

ISF researcher Jane Daly, carried out literature reviews and research into the cultural meanings of meat and dairy. Jane presented her findings at the International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, January 2011.

### **NSW Department of Environment Climate Change and Water, Reducing Commercial and Industrial Food Waste:**

**A Literature Review and Options:** ISF undertook a comprehensive review of existing Food Waste reduction policies and programs both within Australia and internationally, with a specific focus on the commercial and industrial sectors. This review formed the basis for an analysis of existing Australian food waste policies particularly at a state level, noting and discussing existing sources of food waste data or lack thereof and identifying possible long-term data collation strategies such as online databases. In developing food-waste reduction policy recommendations best practice examples were drawn from international experience. (2010)

### **Securing a sustainable phosphorus future for Australia for CSIRO Sustainable Agriculture Flagship:**

ISF carried out a collaborative project for CSIRO's National Research Flagships Program's Flagship Collaboration Fund. ISF's role was to examine the implications of global phosphorus scarcity for the Australian food system. In addition to policy analysis, this involved developing a flows analysis of the Australian food production and consumption system, from mining and application of mineral fertilizers, through to food consumption and excretion. The analysis also quantified food and organic losses from the Australian food system and their fate (landfill, vs non-arable land vs recovery etc). (2010)

### **The CPRS and Farm Animal Welfare, Voiceless: The Animal Protection**

**Institute:** ISF received a Voiceless grant for a scoping study to identify whether the government's proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) may have undesirable consequences for farm animals and, if so, identify what impacts there may be. The CPRS, designed to reduce Australia's carbon pollution, currently excludes agriculture and livestock emissions from its inventory (2009).

### **Profit from pigs: an analysis of the pig meat industry in Australia, Voiceless: The**

**Animal Protection Institute:** ISF received a Voiceless grant to investigate factory farming industries and produce a report on the major Australian players. The report will provide a comprehensive view of industry operations, their current drivers and the strategies they use to market their products and influence government, public opinion and societal trends (2009).

### **Eating the Earth: How should we eat to ensure a sustainable future? Dr Dana Cordell, Dr Rosemary Stanton and**

**Professor Stuart White:** What do obesity, factory farming, fair trade, peak oil, peak phosphorus and climate change have in common? Why might our 'pee' one day be worth its weight in gold? With three expert speakers, this lecture aimed to put our daily dinner table and supermarket choices under the spotlight. It questioned the kind of human diet our planet can sustain and looked at how we could reduce demand on global resources, while maintaining a balanced diet and ethical food industry. UTSpeaks forum (2009).



## OUR FOOD, DIET AND SUSTAINABILITY TEAM



### **Stuart White**

Professor Stuart White is Director of the Institute for Sustainable Futures where he leads a team of researchers who create change towards sustainable futures through independent, project-based research. With over twenty years experience in sustainability research, Professor White's work focuses on achieving sustainability outcomes at least cost for a range of government, industry and community clients across Australia and internationally. This includes both the design and evaluation of programs for improving resource use efficiency and an assessment of their impact. Professor White has written and presented widely on sustainable futures and is a regular commentator on sustainability issues in the media.

### **Jane Daly**

Jane Daly is a Research Consultant at the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). Her background is in applied research and consulting focused on energy policy and climate change response. Jane's research interests relate to the behavioural, organisational, systemic and cultural responses to sustainability challenges. She has a special interest in sustainability issues associated with food and diet.

### **Dana Cordell**

Dr Dana Cordell co-founded the Global Phosphorus Research Initiative (GPRI) and public website [www.phosphorusfutures.net](http://www.phosphorusfutures.net) in 2008 with colleagues in Sweden and Australia, as an outcome of her doctoral research on the 'Sustainability implications of global phosphorus scarcity for food security', which she undertook jointly at the Institute for

Sustainable Futures and Linköping University's Department for Water and Environmental Studies in Sweden. The GPRI has since expanded to represent five leading research institutes across Europe, Australia and North America. In addition to facilitating transdisciplinary research on global phosphorus security, the GPRI aims to facilitate networking and provide accessible information to multiple stakeholders, including policy makers, industry, other scientists and the public regarding the physical and institutional dimensions of global phosphate scarcity and potential solutions.

### **Judy Friedlander**

Judith Friedlander is a post-graduate researcher at the Institute for Sustainable Futures examining the role of the media in contributing to successful environmental campaigns. Focusing on campaigns to encourage people to adopt a more sustainable diet, she draws upon her background as newspaper editor and feature writer with The Australian, The Sun-Herald and The Sydney Morning Herald and Channel Nine television producer and researcher. She has also been awarded a post-graduate degree in Interactive Multi-Media from The University of Technology.

### **Keely Boom**

Keely Boom is a research fellow with THINKK, the kangaroo think tank, which is based at ISF. Keely is an animal law and environmental law expert. She graduated from the University of Wollongong with a Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Law (Honours). Keely has a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice and has been admitted to practice as a lawyer in NSW. Her research focuses on the law and

policy governing the killing of kangaroos. Keely was the first intern to be taken on with animal protection institute Voiceless and served as an intern with the legal unit of Greenpeace International in Amsterdam. She is a PhD candidate at the University of Wollongong and is Executive Officer of the Australian Climate Justice Program.

### **Louise Boronyak**

Louise Boronyak is a project coordinator at the Institute for Sustainable Futures. Her experience is predominantly in the private sector in a range of project management, coordination and stakeholder communication roles in green businesses and the finance sector. Louise previously worked in various economics and finance roles with various international banks before embarking on a Masters of Environmental Management. Louise is project manager for THINKK and has worked on ISF's Voiceless projects.

### **Jade Herriman**

With a background in environmental science, Jade Herriman has worked with several local councils to deliver innovative sustainability programs across many technical disciplines. She has worked on stormwater, water conservation, energy efficiency, urban biodiversity and community engagement projects and has a particular interest in organisational and social aspects of sustainability. Jade has experience in the application of public participation processes to local government planning and environmental management. She has a special interest in local government food initiatives such as community gardens and vegetarian food choices in restaurants.



## BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH ISF

### **Track record:**

We have been conducting project based research for Australian and international clients for a decade and have an excellent reputation for innovative solutions-focused work.

### **Grounded in theory and best practice:**

Our researchers are not only up to date with best practice and current thinking — they contribute to it. Their research is published regularly in academic journals as well as industry and scientific publications and the popular media.

### **Practical & diverse experience:**

Our researchers come from varied backgrounds, including: engineering architecture, management, economics, science, social sciences, international studies and political studies. Most have worked in both government and commercial environments, so we know how to deliver independent and feasible solutions to suit the needs of a diverse range of clients. We are small enough to offer our clients personalised service and large enough to offer a diversity of research skills.

### **Collaborative approach:**

We seek to create change towards a sustainable futures by building capacity in organisations and individuals, and in the community more broadly. This means that we actively aim to pass on our knowledge and skills to our clients through close collaboration.



## WAYS WE CAN HELP

### **Consulting and research services:**

We can provide the research you need to move towards sustainable futures. We provide consulting services under both negotiated and tendered contracts.

### **Professional advice:**

You may need assistance with preliminary work before embarking on a larger project or an external review of an existing program. Our professional advice is available either for an hourly rate or on a package basis.

### **Partnerships:**

Whilst we have many ongoing partnerships across a range of technical fields and can coordinate a specialist team to meet your requirements, our researchers are also available to join new or existing partnerships as needed.

### **Guest speakers:**

We are experienced in communicating complex issues in an accessible and engaging way. Our researchers are often invited to speak at conferences, forums, workshops and seminars. We are also frequently called upon by print, radio and television journalists for expert opinion.

## PUBLICATIONS

We are committed to sharing the results of our work in the interests of a more sustainable future for all. Many of our reports, discussion papers, journal articles and conference papers can be downloaded from our website.

## CONTACT US

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