22 attendees – Kathy Jarrett, Alan Blackburn, Diana Condylas, Sarah Swain, Ken Bellamy, Tonielle Christensen, Bev, Ann Robinson, Kristen, Leon Van Wyk, Murray, Sandy McCathie, Lyn Van Wyk, Sarah Funkhouser, Mike Vance, Jill, Dayanah + 5

Objective established. After collaboration by the attendees, Murray suggested an objective for Food for Thought: To promote the production and consumption of locally-produced organic food. Ken added: Do this by: a) Developing a sense of community via a community forum and to grow the group; b) Develop networks of local growers, restaurants and markets; c) Be an information source via workshops, education and school programs.

Sarah Swain write: I would like the forum to include educational aspects for those within the group that may not have comprehensive knowledge to start with. Plus be a group to provide networks/links/ideas so we know what is going on in the community, where it is happening and who/where to go to get more information.

Other suggestions were: Food for Thought as a hub to find out what sustainable practices are happening in Townsville; Education on how to live more sustainably; To be active in forming a Farmers Market; Being part of making Townsville a greener city

Kathy noted that there were new faces at each meeting, showing that word is getting around and people are interested.

A topic raised was the development of a North Queensland growing list and seasonal foods list. Does anyone have access to one or willing to do the research and distribute it?

Sandy wanted to know how to share information out to the community who may not be willing or able to come to meetings but would be interested or benefit from the information at Food for Thought. She found the last meeting informative and has offered to host the Food for Thought page on her website www.ecosavvy.com.au

Murray was interested in promoting verge gardens and brought up many relevant topics, such as there are an average of 65 days of rainfall in Townsville per year; We have to change our diet to adapt to what grows in our local surroundings rather than live for the convenience of supermarket foods that have many food miles and poorer nutrient levels than fresh local produce; encouraging local restaurants to embrace and promote local foods; prioritise our own food supply rather than supplying supermarkets which means produce is shipped down to Brisbane’s distribution centre then back up.

A vision of Murray’s, seconded by the group, was to help achieve more local food options. If interested in getting active let me know and I’ll link you up with Murray.

Ken advised that there are two egg suppliers of organic and free-range eggs. One is Pace eggs. If you know any other true free-range/organic egg suppliers that humanely raise their chickens, let me know and I will post their details. Bluewater Organics (shop at Amcal Centre on Thuringowa Drive) used to have eggs available. Is this still the case? Yamagishi “Happy” Eggs were also mentioned.

There is a Sustainable Townsville initiative between council and community groups: http://www.soe-townsville.org/sustainable/

A Permablitz group was suggested to go to people’s houses that want to set up vegie patches and help them do it. Any volunteers please let me know and I can get you all in contact with each other.

Another suggestion was about public food: Keep a record of where wild fruit trees are found or overhanging trees and vines and have information publicly available. The Scrumplers idea may be an inspiration: http://www.livelocal.org.au/experiment/86/scrumplers-delight

Leon suggested that screening documentaries that highlight global sustainability, food, health and community issues would expand our knowledge of what is really happening in our world. Activities that encourage community cohesion; and even improvement in the sustainability of transport.
The Permaculture Townsville blog can also be a source of Food for Thought information and can share anything learned at meeting or from activities. http://permaculturetownsville.org/

Ken mentioned Integrated Townsville – Dylan Fennell is on council’s Sustainable Townsville initiative. Ken is a member of Carbon Townsville Community Cluster: http://www.carbontownsville.org/

Tonielle mentioned Kanat and Food for Thought having a stall at the Reef to Soil event. For more information contact Tonielle.

Lyn said her ideal was to grow the group and spread information learned out in the greater community with a particular focus on schools. If anyone is interested in school health, school gardens, nutrition education in schools and would like to do something about it, please get in touch and I will connect you with Lyn.

Sarah Funkhouser spoke about Renew Townsville and her art and community space related to food, bulk-buying local food and suggested that it may be a good space for a future Food for Thought gathering: http://renewtownsville.wordpress.com/; http://tbdtownsville.com/tbd-general/renew-townsville-a-great-idea

The group wanted to encourage supermarkets to label locally-grown food. If anyone would like to start contacting supermarkets or would like to write an initial draft for an email, please get in touch and I’ll connect you with each other. Many hands make light work and there’s power in Community.

Kristen is from JCU and starting a food garden. Everyone was very excited by this. If you have any connection with JCU and/or would like to get involved, please let me know and I’ll connect you to Kristen.

Ann was interested in local organic food accessibility

Bev was enthusiastic about growing food and advised that there is a Vietnam vets stall at Willows market that sells excess locally grown produce. Go and check it out and support the veterans.

Other sources of some local produce are other stalls at Willows Market, Cotters Market and Showground Market. Jenny and Neal Dudgell from Bluewater Organics also grow some of their own produce.

Mike from Majors Creek Farm, a local grower, expressed interest in being involved in a true farmers market, eating what’s in season (knowing what’s in season) and in educating people that eating in season means you’re not always going to get what you want when you want and that it is a construction of the supermarket industry.

Jill said she was interested in knowing by asking growers to explain when it was picked and what chemicals were used on it.

Dayanah was interested in a recipe share and growing her own food.

A Food for Thought Townsville Yahoo7 Group has been established for anyone to join and share recipes, photos, articles, links, promote your business, connect with people, ask questions and have anyone answer and to post these notes from each meeting. Please join at: http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/Food4Thought_Tsvl/

A Facebook group has also been established: Join at: http://www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=ts