

final report

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Healthy Ageing Project: Development of tools and model of collaboration

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Executive summary

The aged care sector is large, diverse and fragmented. Institutions can be for-profit, others are not-for-profit. Some are very large, others very small. Some offer high care; others offer independent living. Aged care service providers also service elders at home care and there are many elders who do not use any services provided and live at home or with families.

The sector is under immense stress with the ongoing Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and more especially with Covid 19. There are ever-increasing demands with fixed funding, changing demographics, workforce shortages to provide the level of safety and quality expected by the community.

A particular concern is the provision of quality food. Centre-of-plate protein is considered a high priority by nutritionists and institutions. While red meat is a convenient way to boost protein it is perceived as high cost. This is partly due to the fragmented nature of the industry, with tender specifications being separately developed by different aged care services which leads to inconsistency, duplication, wastage and expensive supply operations.

This project revealed that the red meat industry and the aged care sector are willing to work together to overcome the challenges. There is an enthusiasm to develop cuts, recipes and packaging options to meet the needs of elder consumers. However to work together well for the benefit of both industries, it is first necessary align the supply chain through common practices and language for products, specifications, handling and cooking instructions.

This report recommends an across sector group be convened to develop the Red Meat Guide to Aged Care. Using design principles, the elders and their family will be at the centre of the development process. Supply chain representatives will be engaged to ensure that the result is a practical and relevant guide which assists both sectors to provide and procure red meat in the most cost effective and nutritious form.

It is proposed that to maintain momentum in the discovery exercise is to engage with an expanded network through facilitated workshops and interactions, phased over a medium to long term, to develop the required relationships and trust across the associated organisations. See Section 7.3 (ie proposed next steps and schedule).

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1 Background

1.1 The older consumer

People over 65 years old represent a significant proportion of the Australian population. In 2016 there were 3.7 million people and by 2056 there will be 8.7 million.¹

As a consequence the aged care sector is growing, particularly for people over 85 years. In 2017 there were 902 organisations providing 200,689 funded places which are set to increase by 83000 beds by 2027.² The majority of residents are over 85 years old.

However, food and nutrition is an issue for older citizens. Dietician Dr Cherie Hugo led research on more than 800 aged care facilities in Australia and found on average, homes were only spending \$6.08 per day per resident.³ This is significantly less than the average spent by non-residents (\$10.00 per day).

There are specific issues for older people and diet. For example:

- Elders often have different eating/nutritional requirements to other family members. They have a preference for traditional and cultural meals.
- Many older people have difficulty swallowing (dysphasia) and the texture of current red meat properties may not be suitable. Pureeing meat changes the properties and results in something that is far removed from the original.
- There may be a loss of appetite due to diminished sensitivity to tastes and aromas, affected by age and medications, and also difficulties with chewing and swallowing.
- Many older people suffer from a loss of dexterity which makes everyday tasks like chopping and opening packaging a challenge.
- Older people may prefer many small meals (grazing) rather than the scheduled cooked meal options.

1.2 The project brief

MLA has recognised the opportunity to not only create a sustainable market, but also to increase the welfare and wellbeing of our elders. With innovation in cuts, menus and supply chain, there are potential benefits, because:

- It's a massive and growing market, which means production runs are of significant volume which make it affordable
- Red meat is a great source of protein and it is also a familiar staple in most cultures. If prepared in the right way it can provide both nutrition and comfort to older people
- It's a consistent market and will not be subject to significant change and upheaval
- There are opportunities to maintain supply through a frozen supply chain

¹ "Older Australians at a glance-Australian Institute of Health & Welfare", April 2017

² Auscript-In the matter of the Royal Commission into aged care quality and safety Feb 2019

³ "Would you eat this? The real food inside aged care facilities in Australia" –Clare Blumer, ABC investigations, Sept 2018

However, there are also challenges:

- There are a vast number of suppliers to be engaged who each have their own procedures and specifications
- The red meat industry lacks experience in dealing with government contracts and tenders
- Cents per unit profit may not be as high as retail and food service channels
- The cost of freight could be significant if pallet configuration is not maximised
- There would be a need to develop menus that are cost effective to source, manufacture and despatch.

MLA contracted Hargraves Institute to work with aged care providers and red meat producers to explore how they could work together to provide cost-effective, nutritious meals for aged care.

2 Project objectives

2.1 Develop tools and a model for collaboration

The greatest challenge was to establish a means of collaborating between red meat processors and the aged care industry. Specific tools were required to ensure that all parties were on the same page and could articulate shared goals, shared benefits and shared risks.

2.2 Explore opportunities with representatives of aged care and red meat industries

The tools were to be applied through workshops with representatives of both industries. The workshops needed to:

- Identify the issues
- Identify opportunities
- Gauge interest and commitment from both industries
- Produce a plan for further action

3 Methodology

3.1 Background research

The consultant accessed information relevant to the project including:

- Population demographics
- Elder food preferences and challenges
- Red meat options

The Hargraves network also provided introductions to relevant people in the aged care sector, while MLA provided introductions to potential participants in the red meat industry.

3.2 Workshop tools

Hargraves developed a process and tools to build trust between the sectors and which would provide a pathway to solutions. The tools and workshops would evaluate new market opportunities and red meat concepts for aged care

3.3 Facilitate workshops

Two workshops were conducted:

- 19/10/2019: To explore the issues and develop a problem definition
- 25/02/20: To develop a high-level understanding of the opportunities for MLA and red meat companies in Aged Care meal provision.

4 Results

4.1 Workshop outcomes

4.1.1 Attending organisations

Anglicare Sydney, Catering Industries, Catholic Healthcare, Church Resources, Creative Food Solutions, Andrews Meats, Estia Health, HammondCare, Meat & Livestock Australia, Opal Aged Care, Royal Freemasons' Benevolent Institution, RSL Lifecare NSW, Salvation Army Aged Care, Southern Cross Care, St Luke's Care, Uniting NSW, The Centre for Social Purpose, Unox Australia, Country Cooked Meats, Cater Care, Anglicare, BidCare - Bidfood Australia, Bidfood Classic Meats, Allity, Bidfood SUPPLY SOLUTIONS.

Attending organisations support approximately 50,000 residents being fed every day.

4.1.2 Positions represented

Hospitality Manager, National Hotel & Support Services Manager, Consultant, Senior Supply Manager, Business & Product Development Manager, Area Manager & Business Development, Head of Lifestyle, Procurement Manager, Head of Procurement, Culinary Chef, National Customer Development Manager, Manager – Co-Innovation, Head of Operational Excellence, 2nd Chef, Head Chef/Hotel Services Manager, Group Hospitality Manager, General Manager, Customer Experience Manager, Catering Manager, National Account Manager - Health Care, Head of Hospitality & Lifestyle, Sales and Marketing, Director, General Manager, National Customer Development Manager, Business Development Manager, Corporate Executive Chef, Meat Purchasing Manager, Meat Specialist, Foodservice, Hospitality Manager

4.1.3 Agenda

Workshops to develop a high-level understanding of the opportunities for MLA in aged care sector and to develop proposed next steps.

4.1.4 Summary

Eight challenge areas were highlighted in providing cost-effective nutritious meals for residents:

Staff — How to train and motivate staff in hospitality services for aged care.

Funding — How do catering/hospitality managers provide good food within the budgets they have

Supply — How to manage purchasing and supplier challenges with increased resident choice and types of accommodation.

Cost — How to maintain the quality while controlling the budget when protein and produce prices increase?

Valued Information — How to access valuable and relevant information when deciding menus and training of staff.

Consistency of Standards — How to improve consistency of application and standards across sites.

Perception of Aged Care Sector — How to reposition aged care food services as a dynamic, innovative and talented industry where people want to work.

Resident's Families - How to engage with families and especially eldest sibling who have significant influence

(See workshop outputs in Appendix 1)

4.1.5 Conclusions

MLA is faced with three challenges.

1. To provide a confident supply chain so every aged care operation has one red meat dish on their menu every day.
2. To provide recipes and 'branding' so red meat options stand out on the menu and are selected by residents
3. To provide innovative products and training so the red meat options are appealing to look at and taste great

4.1.6 Next steps

To prepare a detailed project plan of next steps for a multiyear innovation program to address the conclusions.

(See recommended options in Appendix 2.)

5 Discussion

The project has shown that there are considerable opportunities for the red meat industry in providing products for elder Australians, both in residential care and at home. There is an urgent need to provide nutritious, tasty and cost-effective meals for a range of consumer types.

Both industries have demonstrated readiness to participate in a process to develop a business model to overcome the challenges and deliver high quality solutions.

5.1 End consumers

The elder market is not homogenous, there are many different needs which are currently not catered to sufficiently, for example some of the groups identified were:

- At home elders
- Aged care residents over 85

- Aged care residents between 65 and 85
- Active elders
- Grazers- those who prefer snacks to meals
- Elders with health and physical problems
- Elders from different cultures

Essentially, the research confirms that all elders want to feel independent in a safe and caring environment. They look forward to mealtimes which can provide pleasure, comfort and memories. Sharing meals provides a way to relate to their community, their families and also to the caring staff.

5.2 Other stakeholders

The workshops also identified other stakeholders for this project which need to be considered.

5.2.1 Staff at Aged Care facilities

This includes service staff, food services and management. It was agreed that staff want to bring joy through food; they want to serve food that residents are excited to eat and are able to eat. They want happy residents and families, with no complaints or issues.

However there is a need for enhanced skills in food preparation and presentation. With tight budgets, skills, resources and time, there is often insufficient opportunity to provide a food experience that meets the needs of diverse consumers.

5.2.2 Families

The families often make choices on behalf of their parents. They want to feel guilt-free while their parents live a long life in a safe and caring environment, where they are treated as important. They need to trust that their parents are getting safe and nutritious meals and have some choice about what and when they eat.

5.3 Product options

Workshop participants identified a number of product options that could address the needs and challenges which include:

- New cuts which are more affordable
- Recipes for different cuts which are more cost effective
- Ready meals which can be produced for home delivery and institutions,
- Nutritious red meat snacks rather for grazing
- Meals that look appealing to stimulate appetite
- Meals from different cultures

5.4 Collaboration opportunities

It was agreed that red meat is a very good option for providing nutritious meals. However, as previously noted there are significant price barriers. Providers identified the cost of getting quality cuts prepared and presented in appealing ways.

Red meat industry representatives identified the paucity of consistent information for procurement and preparation, which creates significant difficulties in preparing tender documents, aligning with the supply chain and also creates waste and duplication of effort.

However, this project has shown that a collaboration between the aged care sector and the red meat industry has the potential to overcome these barriers to produce positive results.

Workshop participants were able to:

- Articulate a shared goal in relation to providing a range of nutritious meals
- Work together to identify issues which need to be addressed
- Show respect for the perspectives of other parties

Participants were enthusiastic about continuing to collaborate to achieve a result. However it was also clear that common reference points need to be developed to ensure that collaborative relationships can prosper and expand to achieve sustainable results.

6 Conclusions/recommendations

6.1 Key questions

The aged care sector supply chain from red meat producer to resident is complex and diverse. A common language is needed to align and bring the supply chain to a common goal. The development of a Red Meat Guide to Aged Care Sector would be a common guide for all participants in the supply chain.

As a preliminary exercise in problem definition, a number of questions for ongoing consideration were identified:

6.1.1 The Resident and family

What needs to be done to endorse that all aging Australians, living in residential care or not, can access, prepare, eat and enjoy quality food every day? How to engage with families and especially eldest sibling who have significant influence?

“I want to eat what I like, cooked the way I like it and served well.”

6.1.2 Staff

How to train and motivate staff in hospitality services and have them work together across cultural divide, customer service, table service etiquette and better working together for the good of the residents, including communication and care factor

6.1.3 Perceptions of Aged Care Sector

Given the negativity about aged care generally, and specifically around food, what are we doing to change the conversation to reposition aged care food services as a dynamic, innovative and talented industry where people want to work?

6.1.4 Consistency of Standards

New standards and different auditors mean there is inconsistency of application and checking of standards across sites.

6.1.5 Valued Information

What information is most valuable when deciding menus and training of staff?

What are the barriers for not having better produce and protein on the menu for aged care services, both at home and in residential facilities?

6.1.6 Supply

With increased resident choice and types of accommodation, how to manage purchasing and supplier challenges when everything has to be approved?

6.1.7 Cost

With the current volatility in produce and protein supply and price, what is needed to maintain the quality while controlling the budget?

6.1.8 Funding

How is the aged care industry going to move forward without funding that is reliable, sustainable and transparent? How do catering/hospitality managers provide good food within the budgets they have?

6.2 Recommendation

The momentum created by this project should be maintained to reach the goal identified in the workshops:

It is there for recommended that MLA:

1. Establish a diverse working group that represents the current supply chain for red meat in aged care including health authorities, aged care providers, key supply chain operators and red meat processors. This group will work collaboratively to develop solutions that address the sectors needs. Suggestions are NSW Health, Bidfood, Allity Care. Using designing thinking principles, create and test a prototype industry guide to red meat options in aged care which includes specifications for key products, recipes and preparation guidelines.

2. Build a business model to deliver sustainable funding and adoption of a sector wide 'Red Meat Guide for Aged Care. The guide would be modelled on the Red Book developed by CSR which provides detailed information for all divisions. (See an example is provided in Appendix 2).

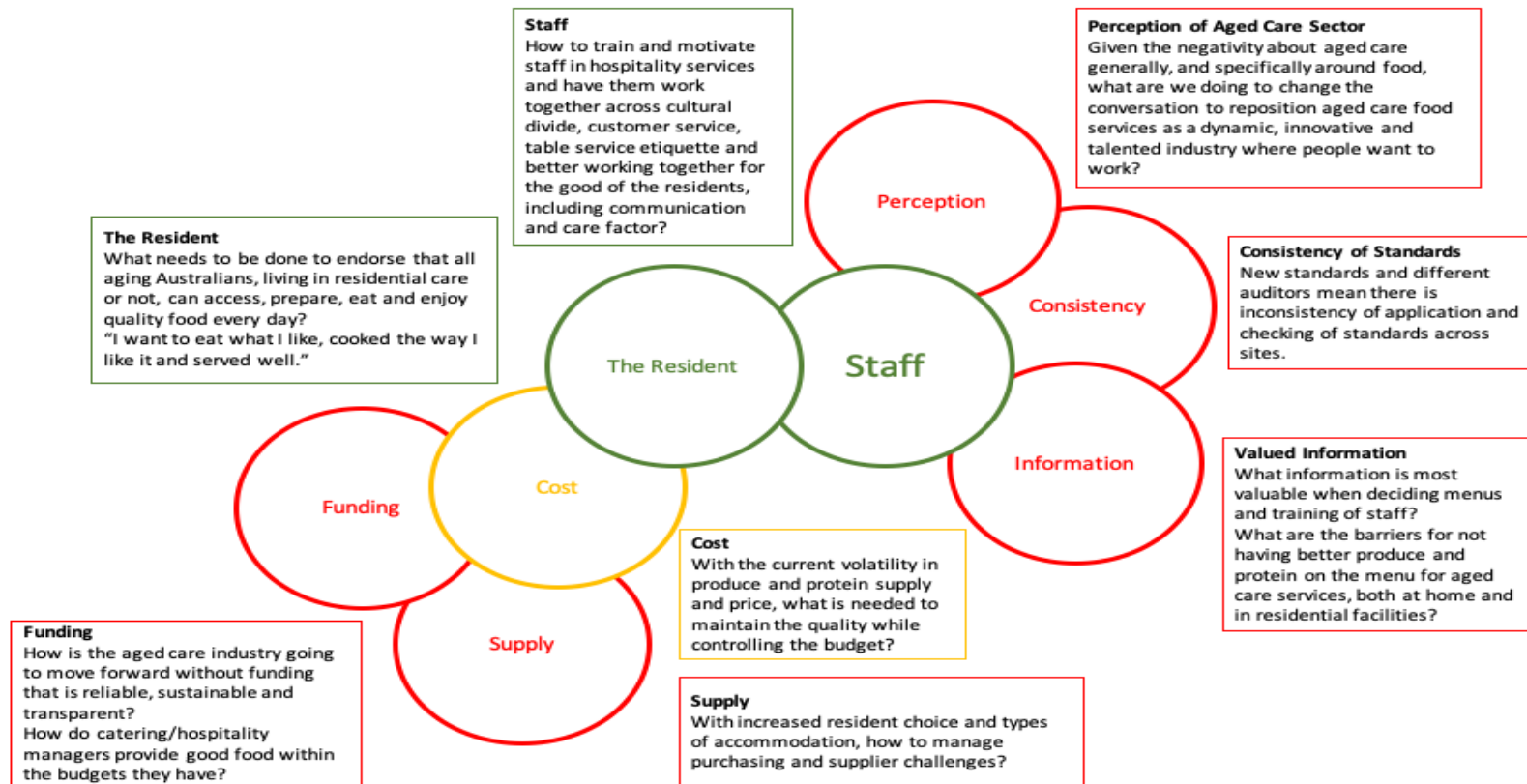
6.3 Proposed next steps

It is proposed that to maintain momentum in the discovery exercise is to engage with an expanded network through facilitated workshops and interactions, phased over a medium to long term, to develop the required relationships and trust across the associated organisations. See Appendix 3; Section 7.3 (ie Proposed next steps and schedule). It is also recommended to utilise the proposed model for Guide for Red Meat in Aged Care to engage more broadly across the groups (See Appendix 4, section 7.4)

7 Appendix

7.1 Workshop outputs (Appendix 1)

Foodservice Roundtable for Aged Care
30 October 2019
Key Issues and Questions



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What do people want?

Resident's family

The good reason (tangible)	The real reason (intangible)
Resident family Safety, trust, right nutrition, quality Attention to detail and individual treatment Mealtimes together at visits Choice of meals my parent likes Parents to be healthy in body and mind	Resident family Guilt free Parent to live as long as possible Parent to be happy and enjoy mealtime Parent to feel important

Residents

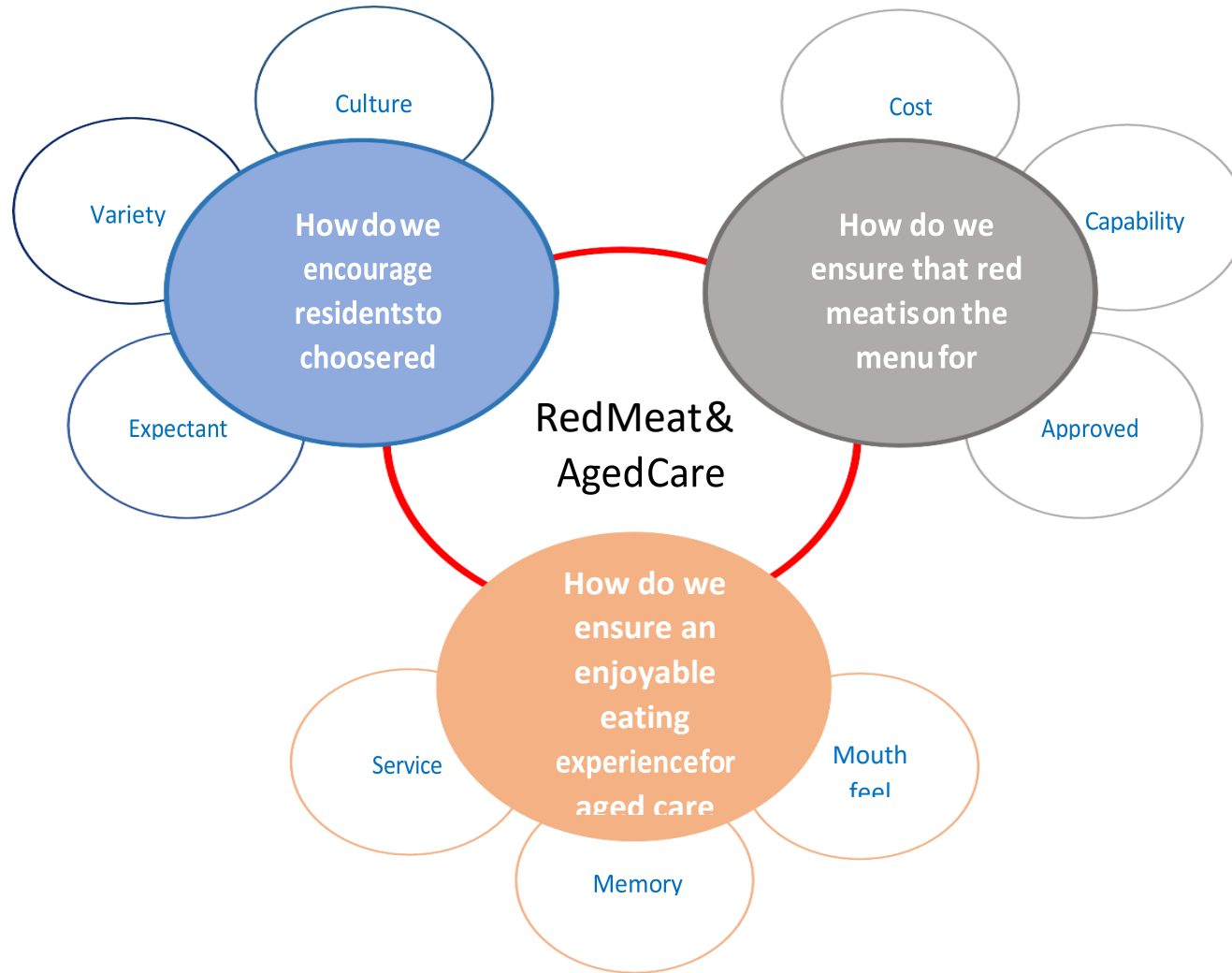
The good reason (tangible)	The real reason (intangible)
Resident Eat what I want, cooked the way I like it Enjoyable food and food experience Grow stuff Do stuff myself Good food, plated well, tasty Enough food Happy with the look of meals	Resident Live the way I want for as long as I can Feel at home, feel satisfied Feel safe and cared for Get pleasure from food and enjoy living Have relationship with staff Look forward to mealtimes Eat something I remember from the good times

Staff

The good reason (tangible)	The real reason (intangible)
Service staff Well-plated meals	Service staff Bring joy through food
All staff Provide good customer service Recognised career path Earn enough money	All staff Be confident and happy at work Job satisfaction and be happy at work
Head of Food/Chef To cook great food To be able to train and lead staff Ensure residents are well fed Want residents to eat	Head of Food/Chef Have passion Serve food that residents want to eat and are excited to eat
Senior Manager Safety Meet financial goals Do job well Resident satisfaction	Senior Manager Happy residents and families Caring profession No complaints or issues To be respected at work and in industry

A person usually has two reasons for doing something... a good reason and the real reason (tangible and intangible).

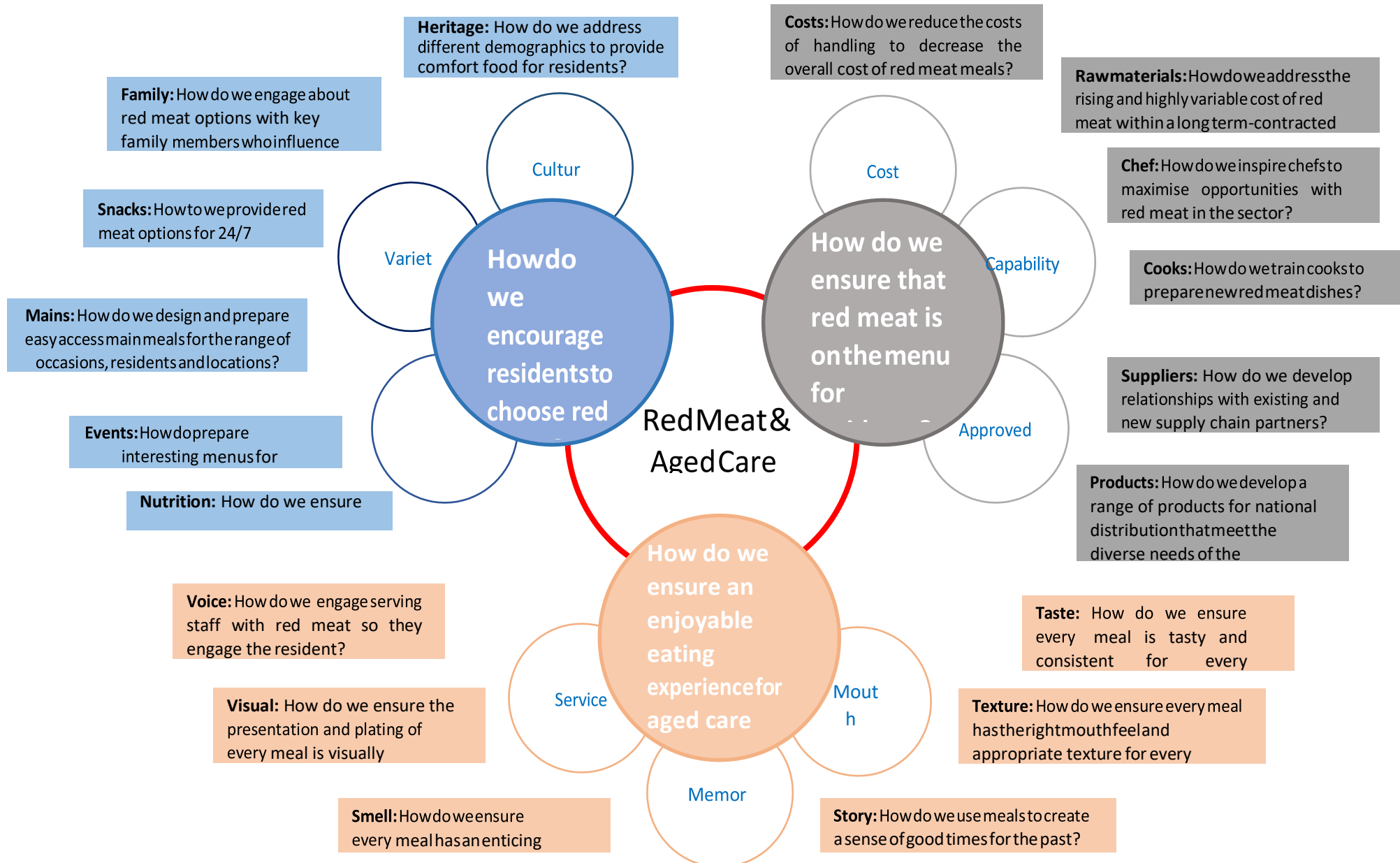
7.2 Red Meat in Aged Care - Business Model Research (Appendix 2)



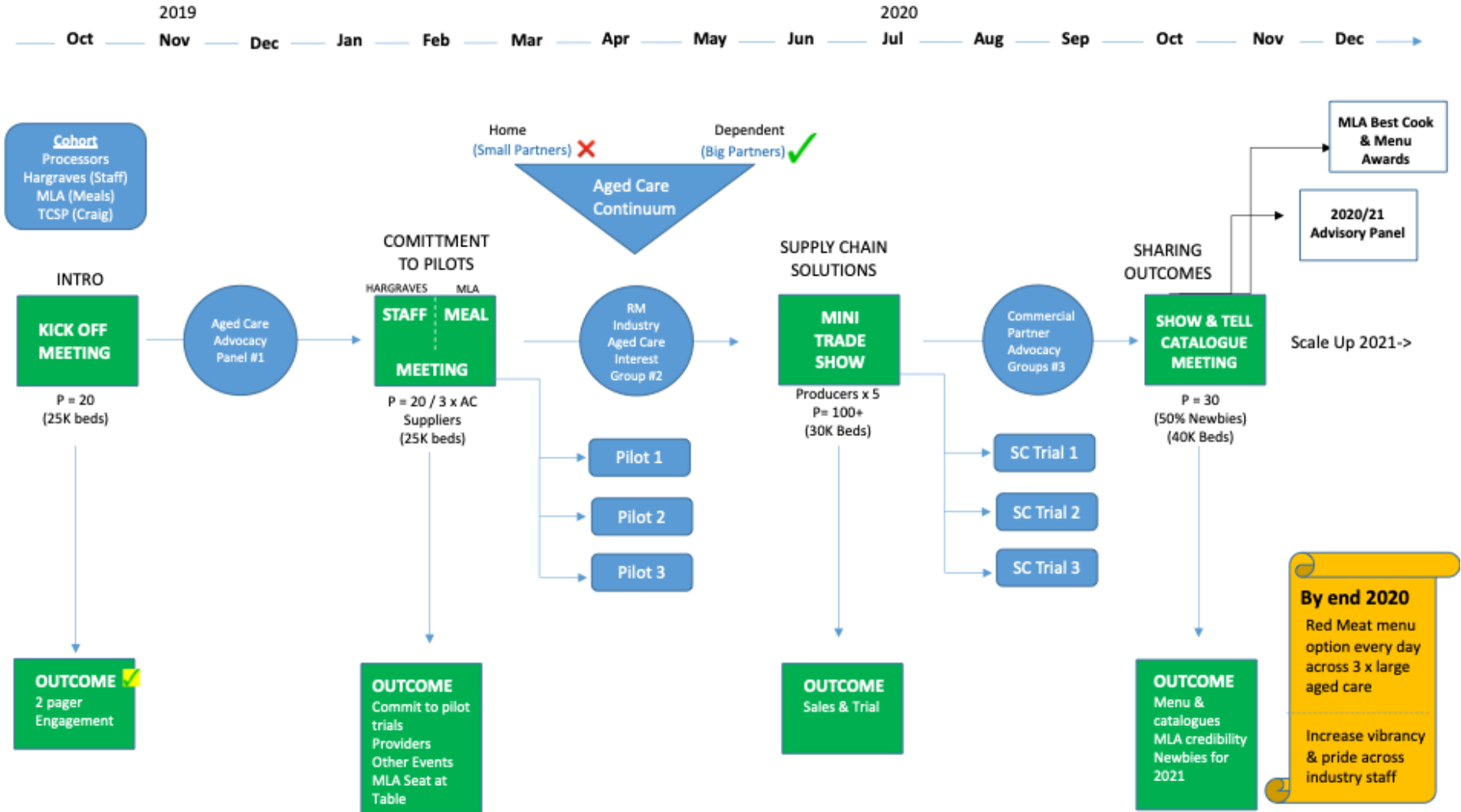
Option 1: RedMeat&AgedCare

How do we encourage residents to choose red meat?	How do we ensure that red meat is on the menu for aged care residents?	How do we ensure an enjoyable eating experience for aged care residents?
<p>Nutrition: How do we ensure dietary needs are met everyday?</p> <p>Events: How do we prepare interesting menus for special events?</p> <p>Mains: How do we design and prepare easy access main meals for the range of occasions, residents and locations?</p> <p>Snacks: How do we provide red meat options for 24/7 grazing?</p> <p>Family: How do we engage about red meat options with key family members who influence residents?</p> <p>Heritage: How do we address different demographics to provide comfort food for residents?</p>	<p>Costs: How do we reduce the costs of handling to decrease the overall cost of red meat meals?</p> <p>Raw materials: How do we address the rising and highly variable cost of red meat within a long term-contracted sector?</p> <p>Chef: How do we inspire chefs to maximise opportunities with red meat in the sector?</p> <p>Cooks: How do we train cooks to prepare new red meat dishes?</p> <p>Suppliers: How do we develop relationships with existing and new supply chain partners?</p> <p>Products: How do we develop a range of products for national distribution that meet the diverse needs of the residents?</p>	<p>Taste: How do we ensure every meal is tasty and consistent for every resident?</p> <p>Texture: How do we ensure every meal has the right mouth feel and appropriate texture for every resident?</p> <p>Story: How do we use meals to create a sense of good times for the past?</p> <p>Smell: How do we ensure every meal has an enticing aroma?</p> <p>Visual: How do we ensure the presentation and plating of every meal is visually appealing?</p> <p>Voice: How do we engage serving staff with red meat so they engage the resident?</p>


Option 2: Key questions



7.3 Proposed next steps and schedule (Appendix 3)



7.4 Proposed model for Guide for Red Meat in Aged Care (Appendix 4)



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