

taste



The Gilruth Street community is part of the Transition Street program where neighbours share resources and friendship.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

It doesn't get more local and community-centric than sharing homegrown produce with thy neighbour. Our food writer Talia Liolios visits a Canberra 'transition street'.

Upon pulling up to Hackett's Gilruth Street you'd be forgiven for thinking you've dreamt up a scene from a feel-good movie. The women are standing around chatting over freshly made crepes, agronomist Sasa Basic is picking produce to share with his neighbours, and as their dogs run around protecting the crops from possums and birds, the postman stops his bike and nonchalantly throws them a doggy treat.

One would assume the members of this close-knit community have known one another for some time; truth be told it was the Basic family's veggie patch which brought them all together just one year ago.

When Sasa and his wife Antonia left their

motherland, Croatia, and moved to Australia, there was one community aspect they had grown up with which they still pined for.

"My neighbourhood in Croatia was more like my relatives than my neighbours; we were always together outside and whenever we needed something we could go knocking on doors," Antonia says.

The couple started the Canberra Honesty Box out the front of their house to attract neighbours, sell surplus produce and build a community through sustainable organic foods.

Over the course of a few months, neighbours became reliant on weekly visits and fresh produce.

"When we first started we would just leave the produce outside and if it was bad weather we couldn't do it for up to three weeks," says Antonia.

"SEE-Change helped us with funds for an urban food structure which got more neighbours involved to build funds," says Sasa.

With the help of Communities@Work and SEE-Change, Gilruth has become one of the few 'transition streets' in Canberra designed to build community and social capital, whilst at the same time helping to reduce Canberra's ecological footprint.

"We don't necessarily want to just grow; we



Antonia Basic utilises homegrown produce from the street for her vegan, organic catering company and hosts monthly crepe mornings.

want to attract the other people who grow food to sell it here. When you have six people bringing a small amount of their surplus then you have plenty to go around and share," says Antonia.

Through the support of the program and the community's contributions, Antonia has started another business called Canberra Magic Kitchen. She utilises produce from the street in her vegan, organic catering company and hosts monthly crepe mornings. The next one is on Saturday 18 March for anyone wanting to come along and share crepes on the Basic's front deck.

Liam Lilly from SEE-Change says if you want to kick-off a transition street project in your neighbourhood, to register with SEE-Change and receive a free toolkit of practical resources designed to facilitate in bringing a community together.

"Our vision for Canberra is for it to be a desirable, equitable and regenerative community, living on less than their share of one planet's worth of resources. It would be great to get transition streets into every suburb, and eventually for all streets to transition," he says.

To get involved, visit see-change.org.au or support the Basic's by heading to Canberra Honesty Box or Canberra Magic Kitchen on Facebook.

