

# The Chinese as food producers

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## Extract from 'The Chinese Question'

It cannot be denied that our countrymen have been good colonists. Had it not been for them, the cultivation of vegetables, so indispensable to the maintenance of health in a hot climate like this, would scarcely have been attempted in the neighbourhood of some of the goldfields; and the mortality of children would have been very much greater than it really has been. Lease or sell half an acre of apparently worthless land to a small party of Chinamen, and, if there is access to any kind of water or manure, they will transform it, by the system of intensive husbandry, into a most prolific garden, and will make it yield such a rapid succession of crops as will excite the astonishment and admiration of European market gardeners. As fishermen and itinerant fishmongers, our countrymen had been equally serviceable to the community; and as hawkers of all kinds of useful wares, they are indefatigable, cheerful, obliging, and patient.

Kong Meng L, *The Chinese Question in Australia*, 1888, State Library of Victoria, pp.7-8