



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
House Standing Committee on Agriculture report:
Australian Food Story: Feeding the Nation and Beyond
Inquiry into food security in Australia

JUNE 2026

Introduction

On 26 October 2022, the House Standing Committee on Agriculture (the Committee) commenced an inquiry into food security in Australia. The terms of reference were to inquire into and report on strengthening and safeguarding food security in Australia, including examining:

- national production, consumption, and export of food
- access to key inputs such as fuel, fertiliser and labour, and their impact on production and costs
- the impact of supply chain distribution on the cost and availability of food,
- the potential opportunities and threats of climate change on food production in Australia.

The Committee tabled its report, *Australia Food Story: Feeding the Nation and Beyond* (the report), in Parliament on 6 December 2023. There are a total of 35 recommendations covering a broad range of policy and regulatory issues, from developing a Food Plan and establishing a National Food Council to mandating the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct.

The government thanks the Committee and the secretariat for its work to produce the report. The government also thanks all those who contributed to the inquiry, for the high-quality evidence and commitment to the food security of the nation.

Response

The Australian Government agrees to the first recommendation of the inquiry – the development of a food plan - and has committed \$3.5 million over two years to develop *Feeding Australia: National Food Security Strategy* (the strategy). The strategy will set out a long-term, whole-of-system plan to boost the productivity, resilience and security of our national food system.

The government also agrees with the second recommendation of the inquiry – the establishment of a national food council – and in November 2025 established a National Food Council to advise government on the development of the strategy.

The government is committed to an open, consultative and transparent process to develop the strategy. Information about the strategy, including the National Food Council and the consultation process is available on the department's website at <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/food/national-food-security-strategy>.

In addition, the government has made the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct mandatory (recommendation 6), reviewed the port code for covering grain (recommendation 17) and provided funding to the End Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) as part of the CRC grants program (recommendation 22). The government supports in-principle recognising the special circumstances of remote communities, including Indigenous communities (recommendation 34).

The government notes the other 30 recommendations, which reflect the broad nature of our food system and the complexity of food security.

A response to each recommendation is provided in Table 1. The government acknowledges this complexity and is considering these issues as it develops the strategy. This process is well underway, with more detail outlined below.

National Food Security Strategy

The government's response to the Committee's report is the commitment to develop *Feeding Australia: National Food Security Strategy* (the strategy).

The government recognises that food is a fundamental human need and an essential part of our daily lives, providing sustenance vital for health and wellbeing. All Australians are part of the food system, from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who care for Country and uphold sustainable ecosystems; to our farmers and fishers who draw on natural resources to produce our food; our people and industries who transform, transport and sell food; and our families and communities who grow, buy, cook, and eat food.

Australia's food system is a national asset – underpinned by strong food safety and biosecurity measures, essential for not only nourishing our own population but also meeting the needs of our trading partners. However, our food abundance masks uneven access and equity. We recognise people in some regions and demographic groups experience food insecurity. The causes of this are complex and can include a range of issues from provider and social inequality to geographic distance, poor infrastructure and disruption of traditional food systems.

We recognise our food system is complex, interconnected, and there are different drivers, impacts and stakeholder views. That is why the scope and priorities of the strategy are being developed in consultation with industry, community and government. A National Food Council has also been established to advise on the strategy, which is made up of industry and community experts from across the food system.

Consultation on the strategy opened with the launch of a discussion paper. It sought input on proposed principles, key priority areas and whole of system considerations for the strategy. We received over 400 submissions from people across Australia sharing their diverse views and experiences. This includes industry association, farmers, retailers, manufacturers, nonprofits, researchers, government officials, and the public.

Building on this first phase of wide, public consultation, the strategy entered a co-design phase, with workshops held across the country from March to June 2026. A wide range of stakeholders from all parts of the food system are participating, from producers, public health experts, supply chain actors, to local community and consumer advocates.

The strategy is taking a whole-of-systems approach to navigate the complex interactions and connections within the food system. While it may not be possible to address every aspect of the food system, understanding how the strategy interacts with the food system is essential to identify opportunities and mitigate unintended consequences that may negatively impact outcomes for food security.

In addition, the government has commissioned a National Food Supply Chain Assessment. The assessment will be an early action under the strategy and will initially focus on diesel

supply chains, and then will expand to other critical agricultural inputs, including crop protection products and fertilisers.

The strategy will consider linkages to initiatives across government, including the:

- National Strategy for Food Security in Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities
- National Preventative Health Strategy 2021-2030
- National Biosecurity Strategy
- National Defence Strategy
- Net Zero and Future Made in Australia agenda.

The government will continue to work across the food system in the development of the strategy with the aim to finalise and publish the strategy by mid-2027.

Table 1: Summary of response to recommendations made in the House Standing Committee on Agriculture inquiry into food security in Australia

Recommendations		Australian Government Response	Status
1	In consultation and cooperation with State and Territory Governments, relevant industries, sectors and the community, develop a comprehensive National Food Plan providing for the food security, including nutritional security, of the nation and its people. The National Food Plan must have clear objectives and measurable targets set out in regular updates and action plans, and subject to regular review.	Supported	The government has committed \$3.5 million over two years to develop Feeding Australia: National Food Security Strategy (the strategy). The strategy will set out a long-term, whole-of-system plan to boost the productivity, resilience and security of our national food system.
2	The Australian Government appoint a Minister for Food , within the portfolio of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, with responsibility for the development and implementation of the National Food Plan, regular monitoring and updating of the plan, and accountability for achieving outcomes and targets under the plan.	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
3	The Australian Government appoint a National Food Council , made up of industry and community experts, to advise the Minister for Food on matters pertaining to the food system, and support the development, implementation, monitoring and evolution of the National Food Plan. The National Food Council is to be supported by expert committees covering sectors including but not limited to: production, transport and logistics, retail, health and nutrition, defence, education, access to food, environmental sustainability, waste management and indigenous communities.	Supported	On 21 November 2025, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry announced the appointment of the National Food Council to advise government on the development of the strategy. The Council's membership reflects the diversity and complexity of Australia's food system.

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4	The Australian Government, as part of the National Food Plan, and in conjunction with industry, develop a specific strategy for reinvigorating the Australian dairy industry , one which lifts profitability and production while addressing the economic and environmental sustainability of the industry, and identifies the resources and pathways required to achieve this.	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
5	The Australian Government, as part of the National Food Plan, and in conjunction with industry, develop a specific strategy for expanding the seafood sector , one which optimises the use of resources while ensuring the economic and environmental sustainability of the industry.	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
6	The Australian Government: • make the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct mandatory; • review the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 to ensure fair practices between different actors in the food supply chain and prevent unconscionable conduct; and • institute regular Australian Competition and Consumer Commission reviews of perishable food supply chains.	Noted	The Food and Grocery Code of Conduct is now mandatory as of 1 April 2025. The government continuously monitors the effectiveness of the <i>Competition and Consumer Act 2010</i> so that it is meeting its objectives.
7	The Australian Government, as part of the National Food Plan, develop a specific strategy for expanding innovation and value adding in food production, with a view to enhancing commercial opportunities for Australian industry and enhancing food security.	Noted	The Australian Government has multiple avenues for investing in innovation in food production including funding for the rural research and development corporations, National Reconstruction Fund and CSIRO.

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8	The Australian Government, as part of the National Food Plan, develop mechanisms to promote innovation in food production .	Noted	The Australian Government has multiple avenues for investing in innovation in food production including funding for the rural research and development corporations, National Reconstruction Fund and CSIRO.
9	The Australian Government, in conjunction with State and Territory Governments and industry, develop agriculture job hubs and a regional network engagement and implementation plan.	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
10	The Australian Government, in conjunction with State and Territory Governments and local government, explore options for the development of urban agriculture , in particular as a means for developing skills and encouraging careers in agriculture.	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
11	The Australian Government, in conjunction with industry, review current administration and reporting requirements for seasonal and harvest work employers , with the view to reducing the administrative burden and making use of overseas labour more accessible.	Noted	The government supports the use of skilled migration to address skills shortages where no suitably qualified Australians are available. There are a range of visa products available, in addition to skilled visas, to meet demand in seasonal and harvest workforces, including the Pacific-Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, Working Holiday Makers, Designated Area Migration Agreements, and employer sponsored visas. Through administration of the PALM scheme, the government engages regularly with approved employers and industry stakeholders to understand regulatory and

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			administrative impacts, including reporting and compliance requirements, and to identify opportunities to improve clarity and usability of program settings. These engagement activities inform ongoing consideration of the balance between accessibility to overseas labour, administrative effort for employers, and worker protections, particularly in agriculture and other priority food product manufacturing sectors.
12	The Australian government support the development and expansion of the domestic production and manufacturing of essential inputs , such as fertiliser and agricultural chemicals.	Noted	The \$15 billion National Reconstruction Fund (NRF) facilitates increased flows of finance into the Australian economy through targeted investment in manufacturing businesses. The NRF provides finance (including debt, equity and guarantees) to drive investments in 7 government identified priority areas of the Australian economy including the value-adding in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food and fibre priority area. The NRFC has a target funding level over the medium to long term of \$500 million for the value-adding in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food, and fibre priority area. As of 1 April 2026, the NRFC has invested \$81 million in this priority area. The government is also supporting the development of domestic fertiliser production through its \$220 million loan to the Perdaman Urea Project in Western Australia.

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			In addition, as part of the development of the National Food Security Strategy, the Government has commissioned a National Food Supply Chain Assessment. The assessment will initially focus on diesel supply chains, and will then expand to other critical agricultural inputs, including crop protection products and fertilisers.
13	The Australian Government, in conjunction with State, Territory and Local governments, develop a strategic plan to protect agricultural land from urban sprawl and utilisation for non-agricultural purposes.	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
14	As part of the development of a National Food Plan, the Australian Government coordinate with industry in the development of a National Food Supply Chain Map , identifying: where products are grown or produced and in what quantity, how they are transported, where they are processed, what the major transport routes are, the main centres for the collection and distribution of product, where transport routes are vulnerable and what happens if they are cut. This map should also identify key inputs and vulnerabilities to lack of supply. The Australian Government should consider options for technical innovation in the collection, access to and dissemination of this information and data.	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy. In addition, as part of the development of the National Food Security Strategy, the Government has commissioned a National Food Supply Chain Assessment. The assessment will initially focus on diesel supply chains, and will then expand to other critical agricultural inputs, including crop protection products and fertilisers.
15	As part of the development of a National Food Plan, the Australian Government develop a transport resilience plan	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy, and other work to

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	focussed on food security, including the optimal location of distribution centres.		develop a National Freight Resilience Plan proposed under the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy.
16	The Australian Government implement the recommendations of the Productivity Commission calling for the repeal of Part X of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 and the development of a mandatory container terminal operator code .	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
17	The Australian Government review the mandatory port code covering grain ports .	Supported	The government has completed a review of the mandatory port code covering grain ports.
18	The Australian Government incorporate measures to eliminate food waste into the proposed National Food Plan, including: A national public education campaign aimed at the elimination of household food waste, Repurposing food waste - for example as animal feed or processed food, support food donations, establish regional food hubs, better management of the cold chain, increasing federal funding for the food relief sector, creating a circular economy, improve data sharing across the food supply chain.	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy. It is intended that the strategy will complement and work alongside existing strategies and frameworks including Australia's Circular Economy Framework.
19	The Australian Government provide an incentive through the tax system for those who donate food or related services, based on the Food Waste Tax Incentive developed by KPMG and the Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre.	Noted	The Government continues to support targeted, evidence-based measures to address food insecurity and reduce food waste, including through existing grant initiatives and broader food system reforms.

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20	The Australian Government work with industry to develop a viable system for the recovery and recycling of plastic packaging .	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
21	The Australian Government, in conjunction with the food industry, review the application of 'best before' and 'use by' dates on food , and consider the use of QR codes on packaging to provide relevant information to consumers.	Noted	The government notes that food labelling requirements, including date-marking, are set through the bi-national Australia–New Zealand food regulation system. The use of QR codes and other digital technologies to provide consumer information is under active consideration. Food Standards Australia New Zealand, in collaboration with the Food Regulation Standing Committee, is undertaking a principles-based review of digital labelling.
22	The Australian Government develop and fund a research program focussed on the development of a circular food economy .	Supported	The government has provided funding to the End Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) as part of the CRC grants program.
23	The Australian Government support early adopters of emissions reduction technologies in agriculture through the mechanism of notices of intent, to ensure they remain eligible for Australian Carbon Credit Units under the Emissions Reduction Fund.	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
24	The Australian Government work with industry and other stakeholders to develop standard definitions of natural capital and develop natural capital markets.	Noted	The government has established the Nature Repair Market, which commenced operation on 1 March 2025. The Nature Repair Market is a national, legislated biodiversity market

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		designed to deliver high-integrity biodiversity outcomes and increase investment in nature. The government funded a research paper – released in September 2025 – to explore the expansion of the Australian Sustainable Finance Taxonomy to include the following objectives in the agriculture and land sectors: biodiversity and ecosystems protection, sustainable use and protection of water resources, and pollution prevention and control. While the research paper is not part of the formal taxonomy, it lays the groundwork to translate Australia’s sustainable land management activities into globally accepted sustainable finance criteria, increasing domestic and global investment in the sectors. Sustainable finance taxonomies support the mobilisation of private capital toward sustainable activities and improve market transparency. Developing technical screening criteria for nature-related environmental management objectives in the agriculture sector supports a holistic approach to sustainability and delivers the greatest impact – for farmers, landholders, investors, banks and government.

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25	The Australian Government develop a funding stream for long-term, public-interest RD&E which promotes the environmental sustainability of agricultural production.	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
26	The Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to ensure the financial viability of landscape restoration projects either through co-contributions from government or grant funding that defrays the development costs.	Noted	The Nature Repair Market (see Rec 24) has the potential to drive investment in landscape restoration. The first method under the Market enables projects that enhance biodiversity by replanting native forest and woodland ecosystems on historically cleared landscapes.
27	The Australian Government develop a public education campaign to inform people of their biosecurity responsibilities and what they can do to protect the food system from possible incursions, with a focus on individuals or organisations interacting with Australia's international borders.	Noted	The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has a range of public awareness and education materials available on its website at https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/policy/australia/public-awareness. An international traveller campaign is held over the peak Christmas holiday period to drive awareness of Australia's biosecurity conditions, promote compliance and educate travellers arriving in Australia. A targeted pork biosecurity advertising activity was held in March to April 2025 to raise awareness of the risks associated with bringing pork products into Australia. The department has a new Biosecurity Business Pledge Australia program which is a national initiative inviting

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			businesses to take proactive steps in protecting their operations—and Australia—from biosecurity threats. In addition, it is a legal requirement under the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> that operators of incoming overseas aircraft must ensure that each person (including a member of the crew) on board the aircraft or vessel is given information about biosecurity requirements under the laws of the Commonwealth.
28	The Australian Government ensure that funding for biosecurity reflects the responsibilities and benefits of biosecurity for all stakeholders and the importance of biosecurity to the nation as a whole.	Noted	The Australian government has committed over \$2 billion in additional biosecurity funding since 2022.
29	The Australian Government conducts surveys of household food insecurity every 3 years using the United States Department of Agriculture Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM) as a model.	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
30	The Australian Government, in conjunction with the State and Territory Governments, develop a school curriculum for food and nutrition education , including the universal development of basic cooking skills.	Noted	The Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 was approved by Education Ministers on 1 April 2022. It sets nationally agreed expectations for what all Australian students should be taught, regardless of where they live or their background and it is developed and administered by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). The curriculum provides opportunities for students to learn about food and nutrition from Foundation to Year 10.

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			State and territory government and non-government education authorities are responsible for implementing the curriculum in schools, including determining the timing for implementation of the revised curriculum and decisions about any specific programs used in schools, including those relating to food, cooking, and nutrition.
31	The Australian Government, in conjunction with the State and Territory Governments, consider the feasibility of introducing a schools meals program .	Noted	The government will consider this recommendation in the context of developing the strategy.
32	The Australian Government develops protocols that allow the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council to cross fund research examining food, health and nutrition .	Noted	The government notes the Australian Research Council and National Health and Medical Research Council do not operate joint funding schemes but have established arrangements to support complementary investment across disciplines.
33	As part of the development of a National Food Plan, the Australian Government facilitate the development of: Improved nutritional and dietary guidance , community projects designed to improve localised food systems and food security, supply networks aimed at local production, procurement, distribution and sale of fresh and nutritious food, especially by institutions such as hospitals, aged care facilities and schools. programs aimed to educate groups within communities about affordable, options to access (or grow), prepare, cook and share nutritious food.	Noted	Improving dietary guidance is already underway, with the government having invested \$2.5 million for the National Health and Medical Research Council to lead a comprehensive review of the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Public consultation on the draft revised Guidelines is anticipated during 2026.

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34	As part of the development of a National Food Plan, the Australian Government: recognize the special circumstances of remote communities, including Indigenous communities , in the food supply chain, make provisions for a more decentralised model of distributions in regions containing remote communities, acknowledge community stores as an essential community services, provide subsidies for community stores in remote locations to they can provide fresh food in regular quantities at an affordable price, amend the funding and governance of the Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme to prioritise the efficient and affordable delivery of fresh fruit and vegetable to wet-season impacted communities.	Supported in-principle	The National Strategy for Food Security in Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities 2025-2035 was released in March 2025, with the vision that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on Country and in remote communities are healthy and food secure. The Strategy was developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled health peak organisations, and state and territory governments. Suggested actions under recommendation 34 may be considered in the context of implementing the Strategy, noting: - the Remote Stores Efficiency and Resilience Package responds to the proposed decentralised model of distribution by increasing on-site cold and dry storage; and - the Low-cost Essentials Subsidy Scheme subsidises the cost of 30 essential products so prices in eligible remote stores are comparable to urban supermarkets.
35	The Australian Government assess progress towards implementing the recommendations made in the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs' 2020 report on food pricing and food security in remote Indigenous communities .	Noted	The Australian National Audit Office has audited the implementation of recommendations in the Indigenous Affairs Portfolio and found progress is being made toward implementing the ten recommendations from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs report that the Australian Government has supported.