Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

National Food Security Strategy: discussion paper

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the continuous connection of First Nations Traditional Owners and Custodians to the lands, seas and waters of Australia. We recognise their care for and cultivation of Country. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and recognise their knowledge and contribution to the productivity, innovation and sustainability of Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries.

Discussion paper purpose

The purpose of this discussion paper is to seek initial views on priority areas that will shape the scope of *Feeding Australia: National Food Security Strategy*. This paper recognises and has drawn from the significant body of work undertaken across academia, government, industry and internationally.

This discussion paper is a first step in developing the strategy and is intended to start the conversation. There are questions posed throughout this paper to help guide discussion. Questions follow each relevant chapter of the paper, and we welcome broader comments and views.

The department recognises the significance of First Nations knowledge systems, cultures and expertise in shaping Australia's food system. This includes a responsibility to uphold Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights and ensure Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) where First Nations knowledges are involved. First Nations perspectives on all aspects of this discussion paper are strongly encouraged, particularly given scale and importance of the Indigenous estate in food production, land management and cultural governance.

The government announced the development of a bioenergy feedstock strategy alongside this strategy. A separate engagement process will occur on this topic (see chapter 5.4).

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Introduction

This discussion paper will outline principles, priority areas and whole-of-system considerations to shape the scope of *Feeding Australia*: *National Food Security Strategy*. Australia's food system is diverse, encompassing a range of perspectives and priorities. This discussion paper will gather insights and ideas, invite differing perspectives and contribute to the development of a food security strategy for all Australians.

National Food Security Strategy

The Australian Government committed $3.5 million over 2 years in the 2025–26 Budget to develop the strategy. We will develop the strategy with farmers and fishers, industry and the community to boost the productivity, resilience and security of our food system.

There have been numerous calls for a national food plan or strategy. This recommendation was made by the 2023 House Standing Committee on Agriculture's Australian Food Story and the 2025 House Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Resources' Food for Thought. The 2020 House Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs Inquiry into food prices and food security in remote Indigenous communities also recognised the need for improvement in the supply of affordable, nutritious and quality food in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Beyond government, reports from the CSIRO (Towards a state of the food system report for Australia), the Australian Food & Agriculture Taskforce (Land of Plenty), and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (National Food Security Preparedness Green Paper) have all called for coordinated national action on food systems and security.

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.

Context

Food is a fundamental human need and an essential part of our daily lives, providing sustenance vital for health and wellbeing. Food is deeply woven into our culture and economy. All Australians are part of the food system, from our farmers and fishers who draw on natural resources to produce food; our people and industries who transform, transport and sell food; and our families and communities who grow, buy, cook and eat food.

Australia is a food secure nation and plays a vital role supporting global food security through exporting around 70% of our agricultural production (ABARES 2025). Our food system is a national asset – underpinned by strong food safety and biosecurity measures, essential not only for nourishing our own population but also for meeting the needs of our trading partners.

Up until this point, our food system has been able to withstand a range of substantial external shocks, often occurring simultaneously. For example, during the COVID-19 period, we were at the same time exposed to multiple extreme weather events that damaged transport routes and global conflicts that impacted access to key agricultural imports. The strength and resilience of our food system – and the various actors within it – was tested and performed well.

But we cannot be complacent, and we cannot assume that our current systems and practices are futureproof and will equip us for new, more complex or more frequent challenges into the future. These challenges could be economic shocks, biosecurity threats, climate change, or further geopolitical instability.

In addition, food insecurity persists within certain segments of our community, particularly among low-income households and those living in remote areas. Data from the Foodbank Hunger Report 2024 suggests that 32% of Australian households have experienced moderate to severe food insecurity over a 12-month period. Despite our strong agricultural performance, Australia's international standing in one global measure of food security, the Global Food Security Index, has declined. (GFSI 2022). One of the contributors to Australia's declining ranking is the lack of a food security strategy, alongside metrics associated with availability, sustainability and adaptation (GFSI 2022).

Australia is committed to safeguarding and enhancing our food secure status in a changing and resource constrained world and maintaining its position as a reliable and secure source of food for both domestic and international needs.

Food security

The widely accepted definition of food security comes from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The FAO (2001) states 'food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'.

Figure 1 and Table 1 show the 6 underpinning dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilisation, stability, agency and sustainability (HLPE 2020).

Figure 1 Six dimensions of food security aligned with the current definition
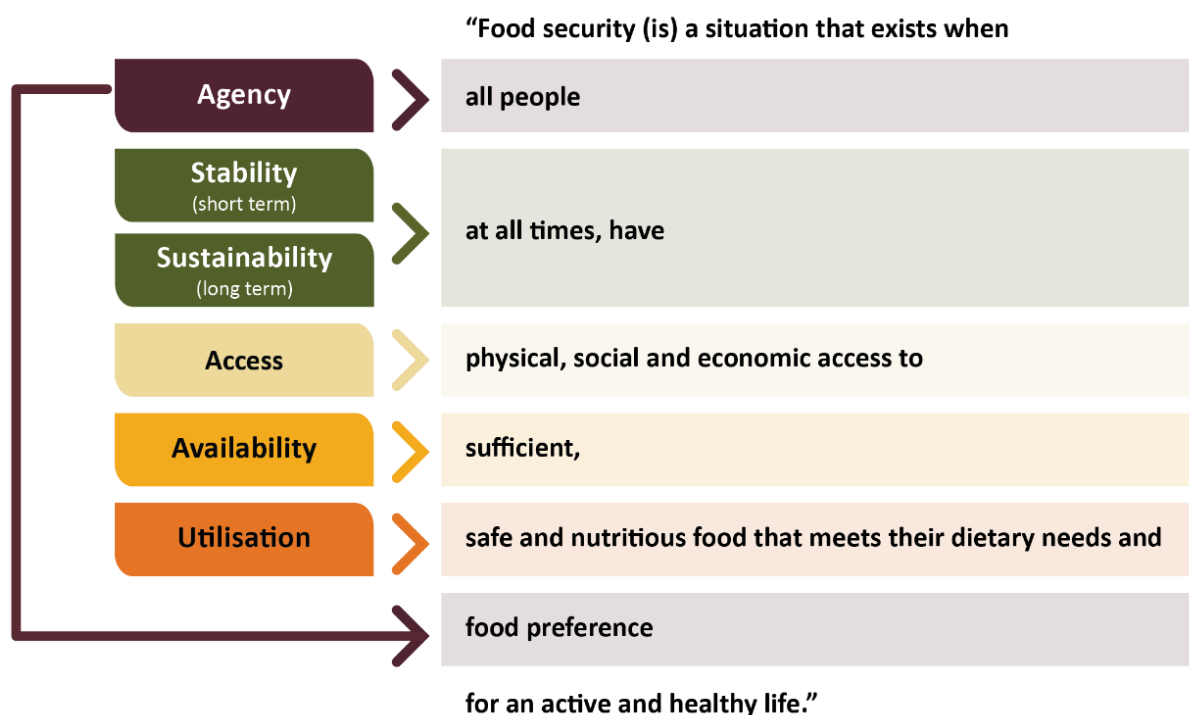
Table 1 Dimensions of food security

Dimension of food security	Definition
Availability	Having a quantity and quality of food sufficient to satisfy the dietary needs of individuals, free from adverse substances and acceptable within a given culture, supplied through domestic production or imports.
Access (economic, social and physical)	Having personal or household financial means to acquire food for an adequate diet at a level to ensure that satisfaction of other basic needs are not threatened or compromised; and that adequate food is accessible to everyone, including vulnerable individuals and groups.
Utilisation	Having an adequate diet, clean water, sanitation and healthcare to reach a state of nutritional wellbeing where all physiological needs are met.
Stability	Having the ability to ensure food security in the event of sudden shocks (e.g. an economic, health, conflict or climatic crisis) or cyclical events (e.g. seasonal food insecurity).
Agency	Individuals or groups having the capacity to act independently to make choices about what they eat, the foods they produce, how that food is produced, processed, and distributed, and to engage in policy processes that shape food systems. The protection of agency requires sociopolitical systems that uphold governance structures that enable the achievement of food security and nutrition for all.
Sustainability	Food system practices that contribute to long-term regeneration of natural, social and economic systems, ensuring the food needs of the present generations are met without compromising the food needs of future generations.

Source: HLPE 2020

1 Principles

This chapter proposes some guiding principles to shape the development of the strategy. These principles are not exhaustive.

1.1 Whole of food system

Food security is complex and needs to be understood through a food system perspective. The food system encompasses all the activities and actors in the production, transport, manufacturing, retailing, consumption, and waste of food, and their impacts on nutrition, health and well-being, and the environment (IPCC 2019). It straddles disciplinary boundaries, involves multiple stakeholders with differing agendas and exists at multiple levels of scale that are interconnected (Irwin 2018). The complexity of the food system means that acting in one part of the system can have ramifications elsewhere, sometimes in unpredictable ways. Complex and uncertain feedback and trade-offs will occur across different food system outcomes and actors (Zurek et al. 2022).

Taking a whole-of-system approach to develop the strategy will help 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.

1.2 Collaborative

Responsibilities for food policy and regulation are spread across all levels of government: federal, state and territory, and local. For instance, federally, 11 portfolios have a role in influencing the food system and food security outcomes.

Government does not control many of the levers of the food system. The strategy will not be successful if government acts alone. Food system stakeholders including from primary industries, community, business, research providers and investment partners all have important roles to play. Genuine collaboration will enable a strategy with shared ownership and responsibility that empowers stakeholders across the food system to take actions in support of the strategy's outcomes.

1.3 Ambitious and forward-looking

An ambitious and forward-looking strategy seeks to futureproof the security of Australia's food system by strengthening food system resilience and addressing vulnerabilities. By looking forward, we can start to anticipate future threats and challenges and take action to strengthen our preparedness. By leveraging multiple levers of change, we aim to create a strategy that doesn't just react to problems but proactively shapes a better future.

1.4   Outcomes-based and practical

An outcomes-based and practical strategy seeks to prioritise tangible impacts and real-world benefits that can be achieved by direct stakeholder action. It should not be a strategy for strategy's sake, or a document that sits untouched on a shelf. Implementation of the strategy and associated actions should recognise that responsibilities lie across governments, industry and community. In combination with other guiding principles, the strategy should provide opportunities for shared ownership, leveraging existing actions and leadership from across the food system and identification of low-cost options.

Questions for discussion

1) What other principles should government, industry and community prioritise to support the development of the strategy and why are these important?

2) What timeframe should the strategy work towards – short (1 to 2 years), medium (5 to 10 years) or long (10-plus years) term, and why?

3) Are there examples of current or planned initiatives by you or your organisation to improve food security in your sector?

2   Key priority areas

This chapter and chapter 3 outline a possible structure and scope of the strategy. The structure comprises 3 key priority areas, supported by 5 whole-of-system considerations (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Proposed scope of the strategy
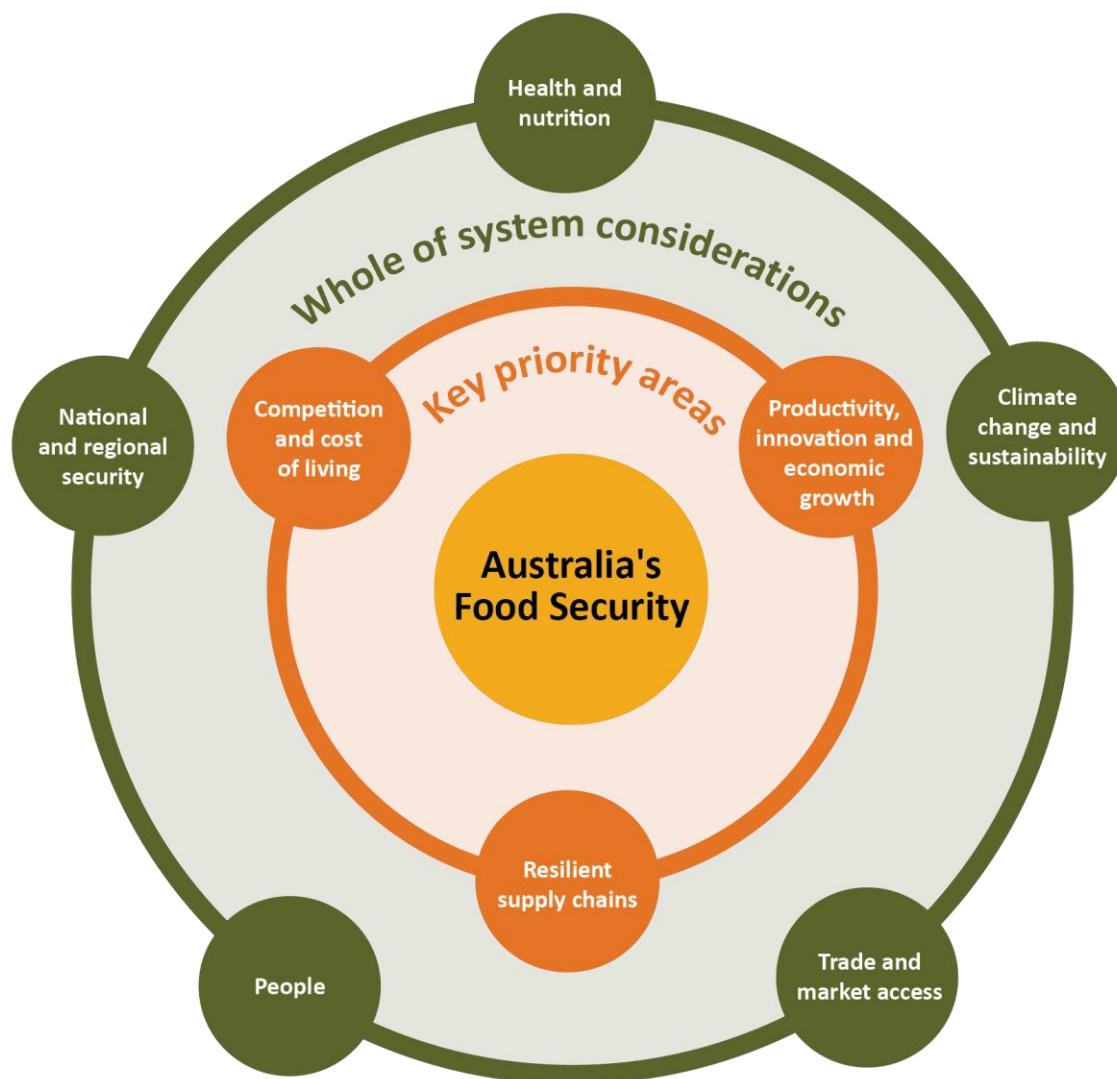
The key priority areas include resilient supply chains; productivity, innovation and economic growth; and competition and cost of living. The relevance of these topics to support food security and the development of the strategy is outlined in this chapter.

> **Questions for discussion**
>
> 4)   Do the proposed key priority areas and whole-of-system considerations adequately represent the actions needed for an effective food security strategy? If not, what is missing?

2.1   Resilient supply chains

Resilient supply chains are critical for a stable and accessible food system. Over the past 5 years, global supply chains have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, trade uncertainties, trade route disruptions and regional conflicts. Domestic supply chains have faced bushfires, floods, drought, cyclones, and animal and plant disease outbreaks. In many instances, a number of these events occurred at the same time.

Through all these shocks, Australia's food supply chain has responded well, demonstrating a reasonable level of resilience. While supply chain disruptions caused reduced supply and some shortages of food, these were generally localised and short-term. However, disruptions to the supply of critical inputs to the food system, such as labour, water, energy and fertiliser, can impact the availability, variety and cost of food.

Our supply chains are complex. Some of our food travels long distances to reach consumers and relies on 'just in time' systems of distribution (Murphy, Carey & Leila 2023). While 'just in time' is an efficient system that helps get food when and where it is needed and saves costs on storage, it does pose a risk to the food supply in the case of significant disruption (Lang 2025).

Disruption to the supply chain is more likely to occur in remote and very remote First Nations communities where the price of goods is high. This is due to pressure from vast distances, complex connection points and transport routes, geographical and seasonal isolation, and inadequate storage and freight infrastructure (NIAA 2024). These remote communities are vulnerable to exotic pest, weed and disease arrivals from countries to Australia's north. Strengthened surveillance continues to be delivered, for example, the Northern Australia People Capacity and Response Network which is enhancing surveillance, engagement and diagnostic capabilities across government, industry and First Nations people in northern Australia. These activities continue to strengthen our biosecurity system and support resilient supply chains.

Looking to the future, our supply chains will continue to face threats. Climate change related disruptions will increase in frequency and severity. Anticipated shifts in population growth, increasing urbanisation and the rise of the middle class in developing countries will shape economic and consumer landscapes. Strain may be placed on our infrastructure, transport and distribution capabilities to ensure adequate supply of food to dense urban centres, as well as regional and remote communities. Meanwhile, consumption trends are shifting towards increased demand for higher value food items, and consumer values are likely to see increased focus on health, environmental sustainability and convenience (Hatfield-Dodds, Hajkowicz & Eady 2021).

Our biosecurity and border systems will continue to play an increasingly critical role in safeguarding supply chains from emerging pests and diseases requiring strengthened surveillance, preparedness and rapid response capacity.

Our continued focus on proactive preparedness, secure borders and effective responses to biosecurity incursions has saved agriculture an estimated $210 billion in avoided damages over 50 years and ensures Australians have access to essential produce.

Proactive preparedness activities that have been delivered include additional funding to prepare for H5N1 Bird Flu, to reduce the risk of significant impacts on our wildlife and agriculture industry,

especially the poultry industry. Government actions are focused on preparing for an outbreak and supporting biodiversity, industries and communities that would be affected.

2.2 Productivity, innovation and economic growth

Australia's food system employs more than 2,366,000 people and contributes more than $187 billion annually to the national economy (AFAT 2024). The state of the economy has important implications for individual food security. Economic growth has substantial effects on diet change through positive impacts on household incomes, employment and livelihoods, improving individuals' ability to access food (HLPE 2020). Food security is important for better physical and mental health outcomes, contributing to positive labour productivity.

The ability of food systems to remain productive in the face of growing resource, climate and land-use pressures is an ongoing challenge (Goessler et al. 2023). Food systems are both vulnerable to and contribute to environmental and climatic changes such as greenhouse gas emissions, land use change, biodiversity loss, soil health, agrochemical use, freshwater use and pollution. If not well managed, climate change impacts from both extreme weather and long-term changes to rainfall and temperature will act as a productivity drag for the food system. Furthermore, establishment of pests and diseases has significant and lasting impacts on food production, leading to higher prices and reduced availability.

Although Australian agricultural productivity has delivered long-term gains, recent trends show a slowdown in productivity growth with implications for competitiveness, climate resilience and rural livelihoods. Enhancing agricultural productivity has been a primary lever in efforts to reduce food prices to help deliver increased availability of food and improve food security.

While the productivity growth slowdown presents a challenge for the agricultural sector, it highlights the value of exploring under recognised contributors to productivity growth, such as Indigenous-owned agribusinesses, which have grown at an average of 10% since 2012 (DAFF, ILSC & NFF 2024).

Technological advances in robotics and automation present opportunities for increasing efficiency and productivity. Emerging technologies have potential to strengthen resilience in a resource constrained production environment. The rise of protected cropping in Australia or smart technologies is driving efficiencies and change within the food system.

A strong, trusted and future-ready regulatory framework for food production, trade and biosecurity is central to Australia's productivity growth. Domestically, smart and robust regulatory systems reduce the risk of costly disruptions, while internationally, our regulatory credibility supports market access, Australia's global reputation and industry profitability. Additionally, Australia's regulations protect human health, the environment, animal welfare and consumer rights – essential pillars of a safe and sustainable food system.

2.3 Competition and cost of living

While most Australians are food secure, cost of living is a significant driver of food insecurity. As food has become less affordable for segments of Australia's population, access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food has been impacted. Low-income, single-parent and remote households are vulnerable to the impacts of cost-of-living pressures.

Over the last 5 years, Australians have experienced increasing prices across almost all goods and services, including essentials like food, energy and housing. According to Foodbank's Hunger Report 2024, increased living costs were the main contributing factor for food insecurity reported by 82% of Australian food-insecure households.

Growing, manufacturing, transporting and selling food are also impacted by cost pressures due to increases in the cost of essential inputs (raw ingredients and packaging materials), energy sources for manufacturing processes (electricity and gas), fuel and labour.

A strong competitive market boosts productivity and encourages business to innovate and work more efficiently – providing consumers lower prices, better quality products and more choice. Australia's food system is dominated by a highly concentrated supermarket industry, with supermarkets accounting for 85% of total grocery sales, and Coles and Woolworths accounting for 67% of supermarket revenue (ACCC 2025). These competitive dynamics are uneven across Australia's landscape – for example, in regional and remote areas where less consumer choice may impact food security outcomes for households.

Recent inquiries show that Coles and Woolworths function as an oligopoly in Australia's retail sector, leveraging strong bargaining power to secure favourable supplier terms and potentially lower consumer prices. However, Coles and Woolworths can exercise monopsony power, which may reduce supplier prices and suppress production to inefficient levels. Whether Coles and Woolworths can, and do, exercise monopsony power over their suppliers varies between product categories, but it is most commonly the case for fresh produce suppliers (ACCC 2025).

The government is taking action to address this power imbalance within the supermarket sector by agreeing in principle to all recommendations from the ACCC's supermarkets inquiry. In addition, the Food and Grocery Code is now mandatory for all large retailers and wholesalers and has strengthened protections for suppliers to those retailers and wholesalers.

There are global trends of market concentration and consolidation across the food system (Deconinck 2021). For instance, approximately 60% of the global seed market and 70% of the global agrochemical market is held by the same 4 firms (Clapp 2021). While this level of market concentration indicates firms have some level of market power, it does not indicate anti-competitive behaviour. In Australia, several agricultural and food sectors are similarly concentrated, prompting the ACCC to regulate with mandatory codes aimed at improving transparency and balancing market power along supply chains. Half of the 12 prescribed mandatory codes of conduct administered by ACCC cover agricultural and food sectors.

Questions for discussion

5) What actions could the strategy take to address challenges under each key priority area?

3   Whole-of-system considerations

These whole-of-system considerations are intended to help maintain a holistic food system perspective by helping to direct the key priority areas to deliver on outcomes that support food security. The relevance of these considerations to support food security and the development of the strategy is outlined in this chapter.

3.1   Climate change and sustainability

Australia's food security is underpinned by secure access to productive and sustainably managed agricultural land and oceans, and the food system has an important role to play in the net zero transition. Farmers and fishers, as stewards of over half of Australia's land mass, are already taking advantage of opportunities to maintain Australia's food secure status now and into the future. This includes efforts to reduce emissions and build carbon stores and practice sustainable agriculture with emphasis on reducing waste, minimising external inputs, using resources efficiently, and managing natural capital.

These opportunities are weighed against increasing competition for and degradation of land in some locations and the marine estate. Water security is also crucial to balance risks and opportunities enabling ongoing food availability for domestic consumption and exports.

Australia has one of the most variable climates in the world. This is exacerbated by climate change, as seen in rising temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns and increased frequency of extreme weather events such as drought, floods, fire and storms. These hazards can lead to a range of food system impacts including more frequent pest and disease outbreaks, animal welfare issues, increased competition for water, declining water quality, and reduced workforce productivity (DAFF 2023).

Food loss and waste can occur at all stages of the food system and is damaging to the economy and environment. Food waste costs the Australian economy around $36.6 billion each year and accounts for around 3% of Australia's annual greenhouse gas emissions (FIAL 2021). Some food waste in Australia is already repurposed into new products including processed food products, animal feed and non-food use such as energy production (Nelson et al. 2025). In addition, food relief organisations have capitalised on food waste at the retail level to provide food with dignity to those who need it.

3.2   People

Food is central to culture, identity and joy. Food connects people, provides opportunities to celebrate heritage and supports wellbeing. Although Australia is a food-secure nation producing more food than it consumes, this does not mean that all Australians have equal access to food.

We know there are segments of the Australian population that experience periods of food insecurity due to their inability to access food. This includes low-income earners, people who are socially or geographically isolated, First Nations peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse groups, single-parent households, older people and people experiencing homelessness (AIFS 2020).

The workforce across the food system is rising to meet evolving expectations around regulatory compliance, sustainability standards and social license. These standards are essential for ensuring safe and sustainable food systems, but they can present challenges, particularly for small and regional enterprises. They also open opportunities for upskilling, collaboration and differentiation in the market. Addressing regional infrastructure gaps, such has housing, childcare and education, will be essential to unlocking the full potential of these regional communities and attracting talent for the vital roles that support our food production.

Not all Australians have convenient and equitable access to nutritious food options. People living in areas with a high density of unhealthy food outlets are more likely to experience forms of malnutrition, while proximity to healthy food retailers is associated with better health outcomes, particularly in children (HMM, 2022).

Place-based and community-level food initiatives offer opportunities to improve food security and boost healthy diets (Kent, Brooks & MacMillan 2025). Initiatives such as community supported agriculture and food cooperatives can help to improve access to fresh produce and empower communities through education, participation and collaboration offering local employment opportunities and enhanced wellbeing.

3.3 Health and nutrition

Food security is underpinned by the ability of the food system to provide safe and nutritious food that meets dietary needs. Consumers trust that Australia's world-class food safety system ensures food sold in Australia is safe to eat. Despite Australia's status as a food secure nation, many Australians experience nutritional insecurity, where food is available but not necessarily nutritious or equitably accessible.

The absence of food security contributes to a spectrum of malnutrition, encompassing both under-nutrition (such as stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies) and over-nutrition (including overweight and obesity). These conditions increase vulnerability to communicable and non-communicable diseases, impair mental and physical health, and can have long-term impacts on development and productivity (Gallegos 2025).

Globally, the failure to consume a nutritious diet is increasingly recognised as the leading contributor to the burden of disease (IPCC 2019). Food insecurity is associated with mental health challenges, including stress, anxiety, and depression, which can influence dietary choices and exacerbate health outcomes. Nutritional wellbeing requires enough calories to meet energy needs but also sufficient variety of nutrient rich food to meet nutritional needs. Sourcing nutrient rich food requires production that emphasises soil that is healthy and sustainably managed.

Australia's food system provides a diverse range of fresh, safe and high-quality produce. However, diets are often characterised by low intake of fruits, vegetables, and whole foods, and high consumption of discretionary foods that are energy-dense and nutrient-poor (Nelson et al. 2025). While these foods are affordable and widely available, their overconsumption is linked to rising rates of obesity and chronic illness. A large majority of Australian adults do not meet the recommended daily fruit (2 serves) and vegetable (6 serves) intake (ABS, 2022). Micronutrient deficiencies remain prevalent, particularly among children, older adults and First Nations communities.

3.4 Trade and market access

Our domestic and international food systems are interlinked and interdependent. One does not exist without the other. International trade supports Australia's domestic food security by providing access to agricultural inputs and access to a broader range of products for consumers. Many foods produced and sold here in Australia may be processed offshore or rely on imported ingredients.

Trade is crucial to global food security and Australia plays a part in the food security of other countries, in both the Indo-Pacific region and further afield, through our agricultural exports. Participation in global agricultural markets increases the availability of food to the world and increases the stability of food supplies and prices. Maintaining stable international trade and market access means that losses in production from one economy (due to conflict or other disruptions) can be offset by production elsewhere.

However, market distortions such as export restrictions resulting from domestic food security concerns, reduce the supply of food available on world markets which leads to higher and more variable prices (Fell & Duver 2022). Australia is one of the lowest subsidising nations in the OECD and we continue to strongly advocate for removing barriers to trade and subsidies. Removing market distortions caused by such policies has the potential to reduce food prices, support economic growth and reduce agricultural emissions (Cao, Burns & Greenville 2022; Fell et al. 2022).

Beyond market distortions, trade is an important part of food security for our trading partners and the region. Export negotiations such as the recent signing of a wheat protocol with Indonesia not only provides ongoing support for the $1.76b annual trade but also provides certainty of trading conditions for Australian exporters and for confidence in biosecurity standards and certainty of supply of Australian grains to support the food security ambitions of Indonesia. Certainty in the international trading environment helps Australian producers remain commercially viable and productive into the future – supplying both the international and domestic markets.

As an active member of the International Plant Protection Convention, World Organisation of Animal Health and Codex Alimentarius Commission, Australia also plays an active role in international standard setting for plant and animal health and for food safety – including standards for trade. Agreed, internationally recognised standards are critical to support free trade while negating the need for more distorting trading conditions.

Robust biosecurity systems underpin Australia's access to key export markets and ensure confidence in the safety and integrity of our food exports. Market access agreements increasingly incorporate biosecurity assurances, requiring Australia to maintain high standards of pest and disease control.

Australia's agriculture and food production is dependent on imports of critical inputs, including fertilisers, fuel and protection chemicals. A disruption to the supply or trade routes reducing the availability of critical inputs could have a negative impact on Australian agricultural productivity.

3.5   National and regional security

Regional conflict could severely disrupt supply chains and threaten not only Australia's food security and stability but also that of the broader region (Henderson & Coyne 2025). Australia may no longer assume there will be a 10-year window of strategic warning time as rising geopolitical tensions are threatening a heightened prospect of conflict in the region (Commonwealth of Australia 2024).

Disruption to domestic or international food security from geopolitical unrest or other factors, such as extreme weather events can have significant consequences for our nation's stability and wellbeing (Henderson & Coyne 2025). When disruptions to the food supply occur, societies most vulnerable are the most impacted. Ensuring all citizens have access to affordable, quality food is important for social cohesion and national security (Henderson & Coyne 2025).

Our national security and prosperity are tied to respect of the global rules-based order and a stable peaceful Indo-Pacific region. Australia promotes and advocates for trade that is open, free, fair and free of coercion within our region and the globe.

Australia is an important development partner with emerging countries in the Indo-Pacific. Our international contributions through agriculture, biosecurity, food standards, science and climate programs enhance their food security and further strengthen Australia's strategic relationships in the region.

Questions for discussion

6)   What actions could the strategy take to address challenges under these whole-of-system considerations?

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4 Have your say

We invite all stakeholders to help shape the development of the strategy.

For information on how to have your say please go to Have Your Say.

Submissions will close at 5 pm AEST on 24 September 2025.

4.1 Making a submission

When preparing your submissions, please note:

- A summary of key points for submissions over 3 pages would be useful.

- The questions raised in this discussion paper are intended as a guide.

- Respondents are welcome to provide more general comments.

- Please send your submission by 5 pm AEST on 24 September 2025.

4.2 Contacts

For more information contact foodsecurity@aff.gov.au.

4.3 Questions for discussion

Questions for discussion

1) What other principles should government, industry and community prioritise to support the development of the strategy and why are these important?

2) What timeframe should the strategy work towards – short (1 to 2 years), medium (5 to 10 years) or long (10-plus years) term, and why?

3) Are there examples of current or planned initiatives by you or your organisation to improve food security in your sector?

4) Do the proposed key priority areas and whole of system considerations adequately represent the actions needed for an effective food security strategy? If not, what is missing?

5) What actions could the strategy take to address challenges under each key priority area?

6) What actions could the strategy take to address challenges under these whole-of-system considerations?

5 Next steps

5.1 Have your say

All submissions will be considered. Your ideas will help inform the development of the strategy by shaping the scope and priorities. The department will publish a summary of submissions and provide this to the National Food Council.

5.2 National Food Council

A National Food Council will be established to provide advice to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the department to support the development of the strategy.

An expression of interest process is open until 11:59 pm AEST, Wednesday 10 September 2025. To obtain selection documentation and apply, please email admin@amandaorourke.com.au quoting Ref. No. 1173 in the subject line.

5.3 Further collaboration

This discussion paper is a first step in developing the strategy. As highlighted in chapter 1, collaboration is intended as a guiding principle for the strategy development. By being collaborative, the department will look to stakeholders across the food system for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate advice and recommendations into decisions to the greatest extent possible (DISR 2021).

Collaborative activities will likely include further consultation, workshops and information sessions used to garner meaningful insights and discussions. These activities will be communicated via email and website updates.

5.4 Bioenergy feedstock strategy

Bioenergy will be an important part of Australia's net zero transition. Domestic bioenergy production, particularly liquid biofuels, opens new economic opportunities for Australia's agricultural and forestry industries to supply the feedstocks needed.

Noting this potential, through the National Food Security Strategy announcement, the government also committed to strategically examine the potential to grow the bioenergy feedstock industry.

The bioenergy feedstock strategy will support a coordinated approach to developing the feedstock industry and ensure sufficient feedstock supply, in a way that maximises opportunities for agricultural and forestry producers but does not create concern around food security.

This work will be progressed alongside the development of the National Food Security Strategy.

To inform the development of the feedstock strategy, the department is planning stakeholder consultation to be undertaken in the near future.

6   Glossary

Term	Definition
ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
ACCC	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DISR	Department of Industry, Science and Resources
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
food security	Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.
food system	The food system encompasses all the activities and actors in the production, transport, manufacturing, retailing, consumption, and waste of food, and their impacts on nutrition, health and well-being, and the environment.
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
HLPE	High Level Panel of Experts
ICIP	Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property
Indigenous estate	Areas of land over which First Nations peoples and communities have ownership, management or co-management, and other special legal rights.
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

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