

Feeding Australia: National Food Security Strategy Discussion Paper

MAV Submission



September 2025



The voice for
local government

No one understands the challenges and opportunities facing Victoria in the 21st century better than local councils. From rapidly evolving technology to social changes, shifting economies to environmental pressures, our local communities and the governments that represent them—are at the forefront of multiple transformations happening simultaneously.

As the peak body for the Victorian local government sector, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) offers councils a one-stop shop of services and support to help them serve their communities.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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1 Introduction

The Municipal Association of Victoria is the peak representative and advocacy body for Victoria's 79 councils. The MAV was formed in 1879 and the Municipal Association Act 1907 appointed the MAV the official voice of local government in Victoria. Today, the MAV is a driving and influential force behind a strong and strategically positioned local government sector. Our role is to represent and advocate the interests of local government; raise the sector's profile; ensure its long-term security; facilitate effective networks; support councillors; provide policy and strategic advice; capacity building programs; and insurance services to local government.

The MAV appreciates the opportunity to contribute a local government perspective to assist the Australian Government's consideration of the key issues and priorities which need to be incorporated into a national food security strategy.

2 Key Priorities and Principles

The key priorities and principles that should underpin the national food security strategy are human health and wellbeing and ecosystem integrity.

3 Considerations for Australia's Food Security Strategy

To this end, the following factors should be considered in determining the strategy for Australia's food security.

- Food systems under stress: Climate change, natural disasters, and rising costs of production threaten Victoria's agricultural base and the stability of our food supply. A coordinated plan is needed to shift from reactive to strategic responses.
- Health and wellbeing outcomes: Nutrition is fundamental to preventing chronic disease, improving mental health, and ensuring healthy development in children. Food insecurity undermines public health and increases long-term health costs.
- Equity and dignity: Food insecurity disproportionately affects people, including First Nations communities, people on low incomes, and those in rural and regional areas. Access to healthy food is not just an economic or logistical issue, but a matter of human rights.
- Economic resilience: A resilient food system sustains farmers, supply chain businesses, and regional economies, while protecting jobs and building food sovereignty.
- Environmental sustainability: Food production and consumption are closely linked with water use, biodiversity, and emissions. A systems approach aligns food policy with climate action and sustainability goals.
- Cost of living: Rising food prices add to household pressures. Adequate income support ensures people can purchase nutritious food without reliance on emergency relief.

4 MAV Contributions to Food System Initiatives

The MAV has been involved in several Victorian initiatives that interact with the development of the Feeding Australia strategy. The most recent [Submission to the 2024 Parliamentary Inquiry into securing the Victorian Food Supply](#) outlines the MAV's position that securing our food supply must be achieved through stronger land use planning controls and a coordinated effort between state and local government.

Previous submissions have also been provided to the Victorian Government, including a submission to on the former Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) consultation Protection of Strategic Agricultural Land (2019), and DELWPs Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land Consultation Paper (May 2020).

5 Sector Resolution on Food Systems and Food Security

At the MAV State council meeting in May 2025, the local government sector resolved to advocate to the state and federal government for greater investment in food systems (including food security), and that it should involve:

- Developing comprehensive Victorian and National Food System Plans. The plans should provide for food security, including nutritional security. There should be clear objectives and measurable targets set out in action plans and be subject to regular review. The plans should apply a food systems approach to account for the complex relationships involved from farm to fork, and foster relationships and synergies between government, relevant industries and civil society, and the community.
- Appointing a Victorian Minister for Food and a Federal Minister for Food. These roles should be responsible for leading the development, implementation and evaluation of State and National Food System Plans.
- Supporting the development and implementation of regular monitoring of food security in Victoria and Australia against the six dimensions of food security.
- Empowering and resourcing local councils to lead the participatory development of community food system strategies.
- Legislating food as a human right and working towards its progressive realisation.
- Improving dignified and affordable access to fresh and healthy food by resourcing local councils to work with other levels of government and the food relief sector to develop a new collaborative approach to food security grounded in the human right to food.
- Increasing income support payments, including Jobseeker, to above the poverty line and indexed to wage growth.

6 Support for a Food System Strategy

As noted in previous submissions, MAV supports the development a state-wide Food System and Food Security Strategy and Action Plan, which has also been called for in the [Consensus Statement “Towards a Healthy, Regenerative and Equitable Food System in Victoria”](#). This program of reform in Victoria will contribute to the national approach informed by councils and their existing strategic work, communities most attached economically and socially to food supply, and Traditional Owners owing to their deep and time-rich understanding of restoring and maintaining indigenous food supply systems.

MAV would be pleased to provide clarification on any information in this submission. For further information, please contact inquiries@mav.asn.au.

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