



The Hon. Dugald Saunders MP
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Western New South Wales

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OM23/1475

Dr. Nick Rose
Executive Director
Sustain: The Australian Food Network
555 La Trobe Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

nick@sustainaustralia.org

Dear Dr Rose

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 February 2023 outlining Sustain Food Network's priorities ahead of the NSW election. I appreciate the opportunity to respond on behalf of the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government.

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government understands the critical importance of our food production sector, while ensuring our food system is sustainable and secure.

Our primary industries sector supports thousands of jobs and put healthy and sustainable food on our tables. In 2022, the industry hit a gross value of \$23 billion and I am pleased to advise our primary industries are on track to reach a gross value of \$30 billion by 2030.

In order to achieve these goals, we have committed to investing in the programs and research needed to:

- prevent, prepare for and respond to biosecurity threats to production and market access
- adapt to a changing climate
- produce safe, premium quality, and novel foods
- prepare for and recover from natural disasters and other emergencies
- develop and access the workforce of the future, and
- preserve our natural resource base.

Recognising the need for secure supply chains, a re-elected NSW Liberal and Nationals Government will appoint a new Supply Chain Commissioner to work closely with industry to unblock supply chains across the state and help drive down the cost of groceries and goods. The Commissioner will immediately move to establish a freight and logistics taskforce to look at innovative ways to drive down transport costs for goods to get the best deal for families across NSW.

As you would be aware, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government provided a submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Food Production and Supply in NSW in February 2022. The response can be found [here](#). A Government response to the report is due 1 May 2023 and will be published on the NSW Parliament website.

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has a long-term plan to get through the current uncertainties and make the most of the opportunities ahead.

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Biosecurity

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has developed an eight-year strategy, the *NSW Biosecurity and Food Safety Strategy 2022-2030*, to ensure NSW is leading the way in preparedness and protection against threats to biosecurity. It's a strategy backed with real money with a record \$229 million being invested in 2022-23 alone to help protect agriculture from exotic pests and diseases. This is the single biggest investment into biosecurity of any jurisdiction in a single year and has stood us in good stead to tackle threats like Foot and Mouth Disease and Varroa mite and protect our food source.

Sustainable, Secure Food Production

In recognition of the ongoing need to innovate and ensure our food and fibre producers are prepared for a sustainable future, a re-elected NSW Liberal and Nationals Government will launch a new hub to help farmers tap into the value of their natural capital and build new revenue streams while strengthening environmental outcomes on-farm.

The Better Environment, Better Farms Services Hub will be a one-stop-shop run by Local Land Services that offers farmers advice, support and planning strategies to make it easier to participate in emerging environmental markets. The hub will help farmers identify new opportunities that complement, rather than compete with, farmers' core business of producing food and fibre for NSW. This initiative recognises the need to ensure our food system is secure, resilient to a changing environment and supports economic certainty for producers.

In the 2022-23 Budget, we also committed over \$200 million to the Sustainable (now Nature Positive) Farming Program, which aims to improve environmental outcomes at the farm-gate to prepare producers for meeting the sustainability objectives outlined in the Australian Agriculture Sustainability Framework, up and down the production supply chain.

The program will reward farmers who opt into an accreditation program to improve biodiversity outcomes on their land, while maintaining or enhancing productive land use.

Collaborative Food System

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government already has a range of existing programs and strategies in place aimed at developing, implementing and reporting on food related issues.

The *NSW Healthy Built Environment Checklist* provides local health districts and planning practitioners with an evidence-based guide for providing input/feedback on the health outcomes which may be impacted or influenced by local and state development plans, policies and decisions.

Food Security

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is steadfast in the commitment to food security and strong export markets. In addition to the initiatives, we are currently piloting a regional coordinator in the Illawarra to assess the potential for increased food donation. The project will be completed in June 2023 and is expected to help inform benefits and potential cost requirements of establishing ongoing roles for regional coordination.

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Food Waste

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has a significant legacy of strong action to reduce the impacts of food waste and will continue to take action under our \$356 million [Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy](#). The Strategy commits to mandating food and organic collection for all NSW households by 2030 and select businesses by 2025. Furthermore, to encourage more surplus food donation, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government will require large supermarkets to report on their surplus food donation to food rescue organisations. We will provide \$4 million in funding for food donation infrastructure, refrigerated vans, fridges, freezers and other equipment to store and keep food fresh for redistribution. These initiatives will contribute to the overall target to halve the amount of organic waste sent to landfill by 2030.

These commitments build on the \$105 million invested in food waste reduction through the Waste Less, Recycle More Program, which ran from 2013 and delivered assistance to over 300,000 businesses to reduce food waste and funding to food donation services, including a partnership with Ozharvest. A successful trial with Woolworths and Ozharvest found that training staff to identify surplus food for donation led to a 37 percent increase in donations.

Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Community Gardens / Farms

The NSW Agriculture Commissioner works with government and industry to review issues impacting the agriculture sector and provides advice and recommendations to mitigate land use conflict.

The NSW Agriculture Commissioner's Report *Improving the Prospects for Agriculture and Regional Australia in the NSW Planning System* recommended that the NSW Government identify the best agricultural land in the State, monitor its conversion to other uses, and monitor changes in rural zones and the effectiveness of strategic plans in influencing development decisions about agriculture and report annually on findings.

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is taking immediate action in response to these reports to give farmers greater confidence in their right to farm and their future in the agriculture sector. The NSW Government Response to both of the Commissioner's reports can be found [here](#).

We hope to have the opportunity to engage further with you in the next term of government as we put our long-term plan into action.

Thank you once again for your contribution and for your commitment to a sustainable food system and the future of NSW.

Yours sincerely



Dugald Saunders
MINISTER

CC: The Hon. Brad Hazzard MP, Minister for Health
CC: The Hon James Griffin MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage

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