

Good Food Purchasing Australia

Briefing Paper

Feeding Australia Strategy

March 2026



The case for the inclusion of public food procurement in the Feeding Australia Strategy.

When you attend the Feeding Australia Strategy consultation, Good Food Purchasing Australia is inviting you to raise public food procurement (PFP) as an approach that should be included in the new Strategy. PFP turns everyday government spending into a powerful lever for health, equity, food security, economic development and environmental outcomes. Please note all data and claims made in this background document are evidence based and extracted from the *Transforming the public plate – a menu of options for people, place and planet* report.

The Opportunity

Australian governments spend, directly or indirectly, more than **\$2.13 billion each year, \$6 million per day**, in food for public institutions and programs, including hospitals, aged care, long day care, prisons, school lunches and community programs, annually.



This is a powerful but underused lever to strengthen Australia's food system. Good food purchasing can deliver **multiple outcomes at once**: health, food security, regional and economic development, and climate and nature benefits.

The Call To Action

- Embed **public food procurement** as a core pillar of the Feeding Australia Strategy
- Set mandatory **targets and criteria for local, healthy and sustainable sourcing**
- Invest in the **"missing middle"** (processing, aggregation and distribution)
- Enable **participation of farmers, small and medium scale enterprises and First Nations businesses**
- Establish **coordination mechanisms across supply chains and governments to join the dots**
- Align procurement with **health, regional and economic development and climate goals**

There are significant co-benefits from PFP across the food system

Social (health, access, equity)

- Improves access to nutritious food in hospitals, aged care and community programs supporting groups at risk of food insecurity
- Helps address poor diets — <10% of Australians eat enough vegetables
- Improves the quality of meals and includes culturally appropriate meals

Economic (regional and city development, livelihoods)

- Creates long term reliable and stable markets for farmers and food businesses
- Strengthens regional and city economies and local supply chains
- Supports farmer viability — 32% of vegetable growers considering leaving the industry
- Unlocks opportunities for SMEs and regional suppliers

Production (resilience and capability)

- Aligns production with national nutrition needs and increasing supply of healthy, local and sustainable foods
- Enables investment in farming, processing and logistics
- Reduces waste — 22% on farms, 16% in manufacturing/ processing
- Encourages investment in the “missing middle” — aggregation, processing and distribution

Climate and nature (sustainability and resilience)

- Addresses food system emissions (1/3 of our national emissions)
- Contributes to food system resilience through shorter supply chains and local sourcing
- Encourages investment in and de-risks regenerative and biodiversity-friendly production
- Reduces food system waste and environmental impact

Why should the Feeding Australia strategy include PFP?

→ Its inclusion will deliver **multiple policy outcomes through one lever and builds food system resilience**

→ Helps avoid annual **\$274 billion in hidden food system costs**

→ Builds on **existing government spending — no new system required**

→ PFP is proven internationally but **underutilised in Australia as a positive lever for change.**

The Bottom Line

Public food procurement turns everyday government spending into a powerful tool for food security — improving diets, supporting farmers and processors, strengthening regional and local economies and reducing environmental impacts from our food system.

Have a question or would like to know more? Please get in touch

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