

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Thursday, 27 May 2021 14:00 GMT +10:00
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	Eating for our health and the environment - balancing nutrition and sustainability
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/15370/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/15370/</a>
<b>DIALOGUE TYPE</b>	Member State
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</b>	Australia

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

# 1. PARTICIPATION

## TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

108

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

Male

Female

Prefer not to say or Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

Education

Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

Local Non-Governmental Organization

International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

International financial institution

Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

Other

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

### HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

In its role as National Convenor for the Australian Food Systems Summit National Dialogues, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment convened a series of thematic dialogues (in the form of publicly accessible virtual webinars) to facilitate open and independent discussions between a wide range of stakeholders on a variety of issues and challenges facing Australian food systems. These provided an opportunity for stakeholders to participate in meaningful discussions and promote Australian stakeholder engagement in broader UN Food Systems Summit processes. There were 108 unique webinar log-ins for the live webinar session – however we are unable to provide detailed participant metrics according to the above criteria. We can confirm that the webinar attendees reflected a broad base of stakeholder and representative groups in Australia including: not-for-profit and advocacy organisations; community groups; academia and the university sector; advertising, marketing and consultancy firms; research and development institutions; federal, state/territory and local government; private sector and industry peak body groups; farmers and farmers peak body organisations; natural resource management groups. Additionally, to promote greater outreach and accessibility for interested parties unable to attend the webinar on the day, recordings and transcripts of the session have been made available on the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's website: <https://haveyoursay.awe.gov.au/food-systems-summit-2021>

### HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The dialogues provided an open and independent platform for Australian stakeholders to share their perspectives on a variety of issues and challenges facing Australian food systems. The dialogue sought to recognise the efforts of various Australian stakeholders (including government, industry, NGOs, think-tanks, consultants and academia) to tackle complex food systems challenges and issues through various initiatives and programs, operating at a range of scales. The dialogue brought diverse stakeholders together to discuss agri-food sector issues and encouraged the emergence of new and innovative thinking, collaborations and approaches. Furthermore, the open and publicly accessible webinar platform sought to encourage and facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement and raise awareness of UN Food Systems Summit processes amongst Australian stakeholders. There was no limits on attendees and the webinar was advertised publicly through social media platforms. The webinar was subsequently made available for both audio and video, by video recording and transcript. Discussions emerging during the dialogue reflected the need for sustained and meaningful action at all levels to give effect to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

### DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

The 'Principles of Engagement', as outlined by the Food Systems Summit, are useful for National Food Systems Summit Dialogue Convenors, and should be considered as a useful starting point. Dialogue Convenors are encouraged to consider modalities and processes which suit their national circumstances.

# 3. METHOD

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The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

**DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?**

Yes

No

The series of thematic dialogue webinars convened by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment provided an open and independent platform for Australian stakeholders including experts, academics, industry representatives, farmers, the general public and others to share experiences, ideas, opportunities and solutions on a variety of issues and challenges facing food systems. Discussions between panellists were open and transparent, and as representative as possible. Introductions and panellist presentations covered less than 30% of the available time. Four to five panellists spoke for 5 to 8 minutes each, providing an overview of the work they are engaged with. Some used Powerpoint presentations, some provided pre-recorded video presentations. Importantly, the majority of the webinar focused on the panel answering questions posed by the stakeholder audience. During the webinar, questions on a range of topics reflecting diverse stakeholder views, were received from the audience and posed to the panel for response. There was an ongoing opportunity to provide more ideas and to “keep the conversation going” following each webinar, by submitting additional thoughts and views through the Department’s Have Your Say online consultation forum, open until 10 June 2021. The webinars were independent of Australian Government processes and views. In addition the feedback provided in this form is also independent of Australian Government processes and views.

# 4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

## MAJOR FOCUS

As the third in the series of Australian National Food Systems Summit Dialogues hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, the major focus of this webinar "Eating for our health and the environment - balancing nutrition and sustainability" was to explore:

- current and emerging food choices and the intersection between diet / nutrition and environmental sustainability in Australia
- various initiatives, innovations and research along the supply chain which seeks to balance environmental/nutrition considerations
- innovative approaches to addressing food loss and waste.

We were pleased to have the participation of the following panellists to lead discussion:

- Professor Amanda Lee, Professor in Public Health Policy, University of Queensland
- Dr Bradley Ridoutt, Principal Research Scientist, CSIRO
- Mark Barthel, Fight Food Waste CRC
- Ronni Kahn AO, CEO and Founder, Ozharvest

## ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- ✓ Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- ✓ Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- ✓ Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- ✓ Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

## KEYWORDS

- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Human rights
- ✓ Women & Youth Empowerment
- ✓ Policy
- ✓ Data & Evidence
- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Trade-offs
- ✓ Environment and Climate

## MAIN FINDINGS

This report seeks to summarise views and perspectives of webinar participants and does not represent the views of the Australian Government.

Three expert panellists explored the webinar themes outlined previously – delivering short presentations to webinar participants. Key messages highlighted during these presentations included:

- There can be important synergies between a healthy diet for people and for the planet. Key changes required in Australia may involve decreasing food waste, decreasing energy intake, decreasing intake of unhealthy food and drinks, and increasing the proportion of healthy plant-based foods in diets.
- Australia has food and nutrition policy frameworks, yet there is a need for greater implementation of evidence-based actions, regulatory action and renewed engagement with experts and other stakeholders. Approximately less than 1% of Australians consume diets consistent with the food based dietary guidelines. Greater adherence to the current guidelines by the Australian populace would likely deliver significant health and environmental benefits.
- There is a perception that healthy food is “too expensive” however there is significant discrepancy as to the relative affordability of “healthy” and “unhealthy” diets for the Australian population, as affordability can be significantly affected by factors such as socio-economic status and geographical. For example, low-income Australians may make dietary choices influenced primarily by monetary cost, and as such “unhealthy” food choices tend to be cheaper than “healthy ones.” There are also significant issues with food access and affordability, particularly in remote communities.
- Discretionary foods currently account for over 35% of the total energy intake of the average Australian diet (a proportion much higher than the recommended daily nutritional intake). It was also suggested that the production and consumption of discretionary foods can have a significant environmental and climate impact.
- To deliver healthy and sustainable diets, it is important to focus equally on the “production side” (i.e. resource use efficiency, lower GHG emissions associated with food production) as on the “consumption side” (i.e. nutritional guidance and influencing consumer choice).
- Food waste is a global issue, including for Australia. Reducing food loss and waste has multiple benefits across the food system including economic benefits for business and households, environmental benefits (particularly water and climate), and increased food availability and security.
- In Australia, one-fifth to one-quarter of Australian food waste occurs during primary production, with another one-fifth occurring during manufacturing. In comparison, across other OECD countries, food waste is very heavily concentrated towards the consumption end of the value chain.
- One-third of fresh produce is wasted in Australia, which has significant implications for food security given the lost nutritional value from these foods.
- There is a vibrant and exciting role for innovation and start-ups focused on transforming surplus food and by-products into valuable ingredients and products. This can help significantly to reduce food loss and waste, create economic value and value-adding industries, reduce environmental pressure and increase the availability of healthy food products.

A special-feature webinar panellist gave a short presentation on OzHarvest, an Australian food rescue charity that aims to reduce food waste and feed hungry people. The presentation highlighted:

- Various activities undertaken to give effect to the goal of halving food waste by 2030 in Australia
- Education programs for youth and children on how to prepare, store and value food
- The opportunity for individuals in Australia to significantly reduce their contribution to combat climate change by reducing their food waste
- Simplifying messaging around food waste to the mantra: look, buy, store, cook

The question and answer session was wide-ranging reflecting strong stakeholder engagement and interest. Some key thematic elements of the discussion related to:

- the role of quality health information, advertising, social marketing campaigns, and the standardisation of nutritional guidelines, readily accessible and available to the public (including schools);
- local food production environments and the significantly divergent environmental impact of production across regions and production systems;
- the role of agricultural technology and innovation for reducing food loss and waste during production;
- the interactions between food regulations and specifications and the creation/reduction of food waste
- opportunities for value-adding and higher farm-gate return through reduction in food loss/waste and responding to changes in consumer behaviour and demand;
- the role of plant-based meat alternatives and their contribution to a health and sustainable diet;
- the concept of “food miles” and their utility for determining accurately the environmental impact of food;
- complexities associated with sustainable, environmental or GHG emission labelling for foods;
- complexities of the health star rating system for foods in Australian supermarkets and the role of food labelling in reducing food loss and wastage.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

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In addition to the topics already highlighted – there were a number of additional high-level key messages emerging during the dialogue discussion, including:

- A sustainable and healthy diet is one that has low environmental impact and contributes to food security and health for people now, and into the future. Food systems have a critical role in the provision of health, sustainability, and equity outcomes. Various case studies demonstrate positive changes, including in several remote Aboriginal communities which have successfully improved health, sustainability and equity through dietary change and improved food security.
- Trade-offs can become evident when making dietary and policy choices to balance environmental and health outcomes (i.e. lower GHG emissions diet versus adequate macro/micro nutrient intake) and sometimes achieving one outcome occurs at the expense of achieving another – however, there can also be synergies – and these are important to recognise and utilise.
- Food systems (including production and consumption patterns) are highly specific to regions and countries – and there is a need to design and implement solutions to improve sustainability and health outcomes, which reflect the reality of national and regional food systems. It was acknowledged that solutions should seek to recognise the importance of achieving outcomes across health, sustainability and be science-based. Australian solutions should draw heavily upon the evidence base from Australia.
- Comprehensive and clear national food policies and guidelines, frameworks and targets can be of significant value to both producers and consumers, and can help to underpin improved nutritional and environmental outcomes and encourage a transition towards healthy, sustainable diets.
- There is a need to ensure that innovations, solutions, regulation, and research are designed with the needs of all stakeholders across the supply chain and distribution networks in mind. Taking a systems approach when considering how to improve health and sustainability outcomes (including as it relates to reducing food loss and waste) is important, to be able to determine interlinkages and impacts of interventions.
- Network diagramming of Australian health and food professionals revealed strong siloing between groups such as academics, decision makers, farmers, nutritionists, and consumers. Compounding this is the level of complexity across the food system. Building relationships, communication and collaboration across the food system will be needed to shift the current siloed culture to overcome complexities and create food systems that are flexible, intelligent, and transparent.

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## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

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In addition to the key messages already detailed there were a number of issues discussed which may have signified a divergence of views, including:

- Exploration of the divergent environmental impact that can be attributed to certain food groups (i.e. red meat, horticultural products, grains, alternative plant protein and other animal products). It was highlighted that environmental impact is highly circumstantial and determined by the highly localised and specific production/consumption context. Assessment of the nutritional and sustainability credentials of food groups is a highly complex and difficult undertaking – which is highly unlikely to be broadly or “globally” applicable.
- There is a need to consider how best to manage competing trade-offs “between” different dimensions of healthy and sustainable diets (i.e. between environmental, health and nutrition and economic outcomes). Similarly, there is a need to consider trade-offs “within” one dimension. For instance, food choices can involve differing environmental impacts across a range of indicators including water consumption, GHG emissions and soil quality. Navigating these trade-offs and consumption choices is to some extent dependent on producer and consumer values.
- Discussion around new and emerging food products, including around the role of reformulating ‘processed’ foods to improve nutritional characteristics. Similarly there was discussion around plant-based meat-alternatives and their role in healthy and sustainable diets.
- Highlighting of potential inefficiencies in Australian food supply chains and discussion of where innovations and change can best be targeted to leverage positive change with the greatest return for investment.
- Discussion around the role of education programs in schools that can target a range of dietary behaviours and be responsive to the differing needs of families– including focusing on activities and behaviour change both at home and at school.
- Discussion around the value of sustainability labelling for foods for achieving better health and nutrition outcomes. The various complexities associated with developing appropriate metrics were discussed.
- Discussion around the roles, responsibilities and opportunities for various stakeholders across food supply chains for improved collaboration, networking and relationship building. Improved connectivity and coordination between stakeholders can generate production, distribution efficiencies and ultimately ensure improved environmental and nutritional outcomes for Australian food systems.

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# ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

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## RELEVANT LINKS

- **Eating for health and sustainability webinar recording and transcript**  
<https://haveyoursay.awe.gov.au/food-systems-summit-2021>
- **Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment - UN Food Systems Summit 2021**  
<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/market-access-trade/un-food-systems-summit-2021>