# National Food Council Member

## Candidate Information Package

**Job Ref No. 1173**

The Australian Government is establishing a **National Food Council** to advise on the development of **Feeding Australia: A National Food Security Strategy**. The Council will be appointed by and provide expert, cross-sectoral guidance to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Julie Collins MP, on issues affecting the resilience, sustainability, and equity of Australia’s food system.

This information package provides guidance for individuals interested in being considered for appointment to the National Food Council.

This package sets out the:

* Context
* Role
* Time commitment and support
* Knowledge and experience requirements
* Skills and capabilities
* Application and selection process and timeline.

## Context

The government has committed $3.5 million in the 2025-26 Budget to develop a National Food Security Strategy: Feeding Australia (the strategy) over two years. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Julie Collins MP formally [announced the strategy and associated funding](https://minister.agriculture.gov.au/collins/media-releases/feeding-australia) on 4 March 2025.

Australia’s 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. 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, climate changes, biosecurity threats, or further geopolitical instability.

Farmers, industry and the community have been clear about the need to develop a holistic strategy to address these challenges facing the Australian food system. There have been numerous calls for the development of a national food plan that ensures national food and nutritional security. For example, this recommendation was made by two parliamentary inquiries, the 2023 House Standing Committee on Agriculture’s [*Australian Food Story*](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Agriculture/FoodsecurityinAustrali/Report) and the 2025 House Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Resources’ [*Food for Thought*](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Industry_Science_and_Resources/~/link.aspx?_id=C664A14BCDD54EA08D5FDD5154BD34AB&_z=z). Further, the 2020 House Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs [*Inquiry into food prices and food security in remote Indigenous communities*](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Former_Committees/Indigenous_Affairs/Foodpricing/Report)recognised the need for improvement in the supply of affordable, nutritious and quality food in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Beyond government, key reports from the CSIRO ([*Towards a state of the food system report for Australia*](https://foodsystemhorizons.org/insights/reports/towards-a-state-of-the-food-system-report-for-australia/)), the Australian Food & Agriculture Taskforce ([*Land of Plenty*](https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-zone1/au/en/docs/industries/consumer/2024/land-of-plenty-transforming-australia-into-a-food-superpower-041224.pdf)), and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute ([*National Food Security Preparedness Green Paper*](https://ad-aspi.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2025-04/National%20food%20security%20preparedness%20Green%20Paper_2.pdf?VersionId=RmroIr5P6nyulLsg6rjTVzZ8JzDpLAfK)) have all underscored the urgent need for coordinated national action on food systems and security.

The strategy will consider linkages to initiatives across government, including but not limited to the [National Strategy for Food Security in Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities](https://www.niaa.gov.au/resource-centre/national-strategy-food-security-remote-first-nations-communities), the [National Preventative Health Strategy 2021-2030](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/12/national-preventive-health-strategy-2021-2030_1.pdf), the [National Defence Strategy](https://www.defence.gov.au/about/strategic-planning/2024-national-defence-strategy-2024-integrated-investment-program) and Australia’s [Net Zero](https://www.dcceew.gov.au/climate-change/emissions-reduction/net-zero) and [Future Made in Australia](https://treasury.gov.au/policy-topics/future-made-australia) agenda.

For further information regarding Australia’s food system the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has released a discussion paper which will be used to gather insights and ideas, better understand differing perspectives and contribute to the development of a food security strategy that is for all Australians.

The discussion paper is available at <https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/food-security-strategy>

## Role

The role of the council, which will be made up of 10-12 members from across the food supply chain, is to provide:

* Strategic Leadership: Provide the Minister with advice on the design and delivery of the strategy. Advise government on national food security policy, including climate resilience, nutrition, and supply chain stability. Align food system priorities with health, environmental, economic, and social outcomes. Ensure the strategy has practical actions and could oversee implementation of early actions.
* Cross-Sector Coordination: Collaborate to build trusted relationships across the food system. Engage with industry, community, and research stakeholders to ensure inclusive decision-making. Work collaboratively with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) on the development of the strategy.
* Coordinated approach to tackling challenges and adversity: Promote an evidence-based approach to tackling challenges, which may appear in various forms, working to navigate and overcome these collaboratively and in consultation with Government.
* Equity and Inclusion: Champion food access and affordability for vulnerable populations, including First Nations communities. Support community-led solutions and culturally appropriate food systems.
* Innovation and Investment: Promote research, innovation, and investment in sustainable agriculture, digital technologies, and infrastructure. Advise on funding priorities and public-private partnerships.
* Industry expertise: Provide insight into the current food system landscape in Australia and regionally.

The council is an advisory role and has no decision-making functions. Nevertheless, council members are expected to take a prudent and active approach to fulfilling their role(s).

## Time commitment and support

The strategy is funded over two financial years from 1 July 2025. While the frequency of the meetings will be determined by the Council Chair, it is expected the council will meet at a minimum quarterly over the duration of the strategy’s development. In addition, council members may be invited to attend stakeholder events associated with the development of the strategy.

Council members will not be paid for their representation on the council. The role may involve travel to Canberra or other locations in Australia. This may include to attend stakeholder events related to the development of the strategy.The department will fund all travel costs in accordance with the Department’s travel policy. This includes economy class travel within Australia and travel allowance rates if staying overnight on official business in different capital cities or country centres.

Further, appointment as a council member is not intended to create a relationship of employment or agency with the Commonwealth. In this regard, the appointee(s) are not entitled to sick leave, annual leave or worker’s compensation entitlements.

The council member should also not engage in any activities that, in the Minister’s opinion, conflicts, appears to conflict, or could conflict with the proper performance of their duties.

The council would be supported by a secretariat provided by the department who will provide administrative support, including scheduling meetings, events and managing communications.

Council members will need to be available to attend the first council meeting, which is intended to take place this calendar year.

## Knowledge and experience requirements

Council members are required to have the expertise necessary to advise the Minister on the design and delivery of the strategy. Members appointed to the council must possess appropriate qualifications, skills, experience and / or knowledge in one or more of the following areas:

* **Primary Production and/or Processing:** Experience in farming, aquaculture and/or food processing, with practical knowledge of production systems and operational challenges.
* **Food Sector Workforce and Skills**: Expertise in the food sector labour force including industrial relations, skills development, worker safety and future workforce needs.
* **Agri-Food Economics**: Deep knowledge of the economic drivers, market dynamics and financial structures of Australia’s food production sector.
* **Distribution:** Movement and distribution of agricultural products, agricultural inputs and food. Includes freight and logistics supply chain and infrastructure, such as roads and rail.
* **Retail:** The supply of food products to the consumer, such as through wholesale, markets and supermarkets. Includes supply of food and beverages, excludes general grocery.
* **Equity and Access:** Access to nutritious, affordable food to all communities, such as experience working with vulnerable communities.
* **Climate and Sustainability**: Impacts of climate change on agriculture and food systems and/or sustainable agriculture practices (environmentally, socially and economically responsible production).
* **Nutrition and Public Health**: Providing advice and access to nutritional information regarding food and the impact of food choices on individual and community health outcomes.
* **Food Safety and Regulation**: Scientific and regulatory knowledge of food safety standards, quality assurance and biosecurity.
* **Food Innovation, Research and Academia**: Food innovation and technology (e.g. agtech) and professional research and/or academic experience (demonstrated research experience (e.g. evidence of relevant peer-reviewed publications)).
* **Global Food Systems/Trade Relations**: International food supply chain experience including global food systems, regional food security, trade and geopolitical relations.
* **First Nations:** An understanding of the issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly around food security, and culturally appropriate engagement and communication skills.
* **Systems Thinking, Strategy, Leadership and Business Management**: Business operations and strategy. Relevant business and/or Board/Panel leadership.

## Skills and Capabilities

Ideal candidates will have:

* Deep understanding of Australia’s food system or relevant components of the food system
* Excellent engagement and communication skills and experience advising senior government, business and community leaders
* Experience in strategy development, systems thinking, and cross-sector collaboration
* Commitment to evidence-based policy
* Strong and effective leadership skills
* Any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest to be declared.

The council will have a mix of candidates and will seek to reflect Government’s diversity targets, including gender balance.

## Application details

Applications for the position of National Food Council member should be submitted to

[**admin@amandaorourke.com.au**](mailto:admin@amandaorourke.com.au) by 11.59 pm AEST, Wednesday 10 September 2025 including the following:

* **cover letter** indicating why you are interested in and suitable for the role, having regard to the knowledge and experience requirements and skills and capabilities (maximum 500 words).
* a short **curriculum vitae** (no more than two – four pages), including details of **two referees**
* completed **Attachment A & Sector Experience – *(see pages 7 & 8 below)***
* quote **Ref no 1173** in the subject line.

Applications will be collated and initially shortlisted by Amanda O’Rourke Executive Search and provided to the department. Shortlisted candidates may be invited to attend an interview, and referees may be contacted as part of the final assessment process. A shortlist of candidates will be presented to the Minister for decision in accordance with standard government appointment processes (which may take a further 6-8 weeks).

Preferred candidates will be approached to negotiate their terms of engagement and will be required to complete documentation provided at that time including code of conduct, conflict of interest declaration, biographical details consent form, confidentiality deed poll, vendor creation form and statement by supplier form (ATO).

ATTACHMENT A

PERSONAL DETAILS

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL FOOD COUNCIL

The requested information in this form may be required at various points of the appointment process, including government consideration and finalisation of the appointment, should you be successful. Please complete all required fields.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Full name:** (title, first name, surname and post‑nominals) |  |
| **Preferred name:** |  |
| **Former name(s):** |  |
| **State or territory of residence:** |  |
| **Postal address:** |  |
| **Email address:** |  |
| **Mobile phone number:** |  |
| **Alternate phone number:**  (include area code) |  |
| **Date of birth:** |  |
| **Current position:** |  |
| **EEO category:**  **A** – Aboriginal  **TSI** – Torres Strait Islander  **NESB 1/2** – Non-English-speaking background, first or second generation  **F** – female  **PWD** – person with a disability |  |

**SECTOR EXPERIENCE**

Please indicate the sector(s) you have qualifications, skills, experience and / or knowledge in (see section 4 for descriptors of each category):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Primary Production and/or Processing |  |
| Food Sector Workforce and Skills |  |
| Agri-Food Economics |  |
| Distribution |  |
| Retail |  |
| Equity and Access |  |
| Climate and Sustainability |  |
| Nutrition and Public Health |  |
| Food Safety and Regulation |  |
| Food Innovation, Research and Academia |  |
| Global Food Systems/Trade Relations |  |
| First Nations |  |
| Systems Thinking, Strategy, Leadership and Business Management |  |