

Australia's draft National Science and Research

Priorities

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Consult hub

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- 8 Who are you answering on behalf of?
Organisation
- 9 Organisation
Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology
- 10 What sector best describes you or your organisation?
Industry peak body or representative group
- 11 What state or territory do you live or work in?
New South Wales
- 12 Postcode
2126

- 13 What area best describes where you live or work?
Metropolitan (capital city)

14 [Blank question text]

In the previous consultation paper, it was noted that:

The priorities should reflect Australia's biggest challenges and opportunities today and into the future, and the role of science in addressing these issues.

AIFST provided feedback that the role of STEM and food science and technology will be critical to transforming Australia's agrifood system.

The food sector is regarded as a critical source of economic growth and job creation in Australia. Strategic investment in research capacity, innovation, infrastructure, and a skilled workforce have been identified as crucial to strengthening the productivity and competitiveness of the food industry and capturing trade opportunities in Asia (DAFF 2013).

The draft priorities presented do not address building the STEM skills and knowledge needed ~ this needs to be recognised as a key challenge which underpins Australia's ability to grow and prosper into the future.

15 [Blank question text]

AIFST supports working in partnership with First Nations people.

The opportunity to harness the knowledge of First Nations people could be recognised within STEM education. There are many opportunities across the agrifood sector to achieve a better understanding of how First Nations peoples have managed the environment, providing opportunities to improve the type of food produced and optimise production systems.

16 [Blank question text]

The AIFST Mission is:

To advance and inspire all food sector professionals through education, collaboration, and recognition to champion a robust, innovative science based Australian food industry to meet future food needs.

AIFST recognise the importance and power of collaboration in achieving outcomes.

AIFST suggest facilitating collaboration of key stakeholders for each research path with a clear mandate to prioritise immediate challenges and develop action plans with clear, measurable objectives.

It will be important to ensure coordination of key stakeholder groups to avoid duplication of effort and resources.

AIFST wishes to highlight a key recommendation from our previous submission:

The AIFST calls upon the Government urgently to work with food system stakeholders to establish an industry-led, food system strategic advisory body, chaired at the Ministerial level, to develop a National Food Plan.

The development and implementation of a National Food Plan would provide the framework for several the critical research priorities, for example:

- Food safety and security for future Australian conditions and markets.
- Sustainable use of freshwater and ocean resources for food, industry, and environmental and community health.
- Technologies and techniques that will enable an affordable, inclusive, culturally appropriate, and integrated preventive health system for Australia – one that drives positive behaviour changes and leverages fit-for-purpose data and connections to Country, community, and built and natural environments.

- Mechanisms of brain function and repair and how to address deterioration of brain function.
- Social and environmental drivers of ill health and poor mental health and the techniques and practices we can apply to enhance the wellbeing of all Australians at scale.
- Causes of Australia's slow productivity growth and strategies to address them.
- Understanding the impacts of climate change on Australia's future productivity and our key markets.
- Cognitive and social causes of engagement with misinformation and disinformation.
- Technologies, teaching tools and systems to support community engagement with information and learning at different stages of our lives.

17 [Blank question text]

The AIFST Mission is:

To advance and inspire all food sector professionals through education, collaboration, and recognition to champion a robust, innovative science based Australian food industry to meet future food needs.

To support implementation of the priorities, AIFST would focus on supporting and enabling collaboration across the food science community in the agrifood sector.

The AIFST strategy (provided as an attachment) is built on four key pillars of grow, learn, connect, and champion. AIFST will look to ensuring the priorities relevant to the agrifood industry and food science are addressed in the organisations strategic plan going forward.

AIFST will continue to advocate for the establishment of an industry-led, food system strategic advisory body, chaired at the Ministerial level, to develop a National Food Plan.

18 [Blank question text]

In response to this question, the AIFST refers to the report, Exploring the growth potential of Australia's food manufacturing sector: a new narrative for Australia's agrifood system, published in January 2021.

The report presented a series of recommendations arising from our review of contemporary information and from our discussions with industry experts. While priorities will change as the operating environment also inevitably changes, these recommendations point to some key activities that will help governments develop a clearer picture about what their food policy is and how they are going to support it. AIFST consider these recommendations are still very relevant to the current

consultation.

Recommendation 1: That the Australian Government works with food system stakeholders to establish an industry-led, food system strategic advisory body, chaired at the Ministerial level, to develop a National Food Plan that:

- i) prioritises and guides activities supporting Australia's food system
- ii) identifies and drives programs so that Australia's food system is supported as a cohesive, nationally important whole, and
- iii) guides government on all aspects of policy that impact Australia's food system.

Recommendation 2: That the Australian Government's work on international trade negotiations and relationships actively supports, and is actively supported by, the Australian food system.

Recommendation 3: That the Australian Government works with food system stakeholders to identify reforms that will make the Australian tax environment more attractive, especially to those food system companies considering capital and/or R&D investments.

Recommendation 4: That the Australian Government works with Australian food system stakeholders to identify reforms to simplify and streamline the regulatory environment in which the food system operates.

Recommendation 5: That the Australian Government works with industry to identify key domestic and export growth opportunities for the national food system, alongside ways that government can support the Australian food system to capitalise on these opportunities over the longer term.

Recommendation 6: That the Australian Government works with industry to mitigate ways that existing Australian policies and regulations are inhibiting the Australian food system's potential to upcycle waste and participate more fully in circular economy projects.

Recommendation 7: That the Australian Government substantially increases its prioritisation and support for food system capability and capacity building programs across schools, VET institutions and universities.

Recommendation 8: That the Australian Government recognises formal industry clusters as best practice in fostering collaboration and growth and works with food system stakeholders to identify and support meaningful food system clusters.

Recommendation 9: That the Australian Government works with food system stakeholders to design and deliver flexible support mechanisms and packages for small, medium, and large food system companies and collaborations.

Recommendation 10: That the Australian Government works with Australia's food system stakeholders to promote to domestic and international consumers the 'Australian-ness', the safety, quality and provenance attributes of Australian food products (in whatever way is best for specific products) – to boost domestic sales, exports, onshoring and import replacement.

Recommendation 11: That the Australian Government works with Australia's food system stakeholders to identify and mitigate key logistic infrastructure bottlenecks.