

Hon Scott Morrison MP  
Prime Minister  
By email: [scott.morrison.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:scott.morrison.MP@aph.gov.au)

12<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Prime Minister

### **Coalition policy position on sustainable food systems, urban agriculture and edible gardening**

For the upcoming Federal election, Sustain: The Australian Food Network is seeking information from all major parties on key priority areas of interest for our members. Sustain is a national body representing 30 member organisations and over 130 individual members who work together towards building a healthy, sustainable and fair food system that benefits all Australians.

Our members support policy levers that shift activity towards a fair food system that has as its goal above all else, the health of the community. Sustain would like to see the incoming Government realise the potential of regenerative urban agriculture and edible gardening to address a number of significant community issues and to deliver outcomes through the simple act of growing nutritious food. The growing urban agriculture sector in Australia is ready to act and step up to this challenge, as evidenced by our Pandemic Gardening survey which received over 9000 responses in 2020 (media release attached).

Diet-related ill-health and mental illness cost Australia around \$200 bn every year. Climate change costs are anticipated to grow, with extreme weather events alone costing the Australian economy \$35 billion over the past decade. While Australia ranks as one of the most food secure countries in the world at a macro level, at the community level vulnerable communities disproportionately experience barriers to access nutritionally adequate, safe, and affordable food. Food insecurity is associated with poor mental and physical health with approximately 800,000 adults per year experiencing food insecurity.

The next election will be contested in the context of pandemic recovery. This will require a prioritising of policies across all sectors that strengthen resilience and equity while delivering the critical health outcomes for all Australians.

The priorities identified below will assist our sector to contribute to the important goals of supporting preventative health, climate resilience and food security measures. We seek your parties' commitments and policy positions on the following priority areas identified by our members:

- **Community gardens:** What is your commitment to expand productivity and engagement of the existing network of an estimated 1000+ community gardens in all regions of Australia?
- **Education, training and workforce strategy:** What is your strategy to improve skills-based training and apprenticeships in urban agriculture, market gardening and related fields?
- **Community development and food security:** Has your party committed to any urban food-based skills building and food security projects either nationally or as pilot initiatives?
- **School edible gardens:** What funding is your party committing towards edible garden establishment and maintenance in the public school system?

- **Land access and infrastructure:** What is your position on facilitating access to under-utilised land and associated start-up support for urban farmers and community growers?
- **Research:** What is your position on funding research collaborations to document the impact and benefits of urban agriculture and edible gardening?
- **Fast food legislation:** What is your position on prohibiting through legislation fast food outlets within 1 km of educational or health care facilities?
- **Transitional support:** What measures will your party take to support market gardeners and farmers to transition to sustainable and regenerative forms of horticulture and agriculture?

To enable us to inform our member organisations and supporters of your responses we would appreciate your reply by 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021.

Yours sincerely,



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Churchill Fellow

cc:  
Naomi Lacey, President, Community Gardens Australia  
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Josephene Duffy  
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