



# Who is making food policy in **Australia**



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Creative media by Gavin Wren

**Centre for  
Food Policy**  
Shaping an effective food system

**Centre for Food Policy Research Brief**  
April 2022

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# Government departments and agencies responsible for food policy in Australia, 2021

Emergency food and food relief support for COVID-19  
Responsible for Social security and carers and housing

Social Services

Coordinates immigration policy  
Source of information for travellers on food items they can bring into Australia

Home Affairs

Agriculture policies and programs  
Water management  
Managing export regulatory system  
Managing forestry and fisheries, food waste, grains research and development

Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Food and nutrition in school education (K-10)

Education, Skills and Employment

Collaborates with the NHMRC to promote the Australian Dietary Guidelines  
Preventative Health research  
National School canteen guidelines  
Resources and programs for promoting healthy diet and nutrition

Health

Treasury

Main work relating to food done through the ACCC  
Consumer and Competition Act - ensures fair trading practices for food suppliers  
Codes of conduct for Dairy, Horticulture, Grocery, and Wheat  
Determines a definition of food for the purpose of determining whether it is GST-free

Foreign Affairs and Trade

Coordinating trade agreements to allow exporters and importers to expand their business

Finance

Supports delivery of budget  
Manages public sector frameworks

Infrastructure (OIRDC)

Investments in infrastructure that optimise agricultural freight system  
Working with DAWE to assist producers in exporting perishable goods during COVID-19

Food Standards Australia & New Zealand

Government agency under the Department of Health  
Creates food standards code - food safety standards which all foods must legally adhere to  
Monitors diet related public health risks  
Initiatives are aimed at helping consumers to make more informed food choices

Main work relating to food done through the NMI  
Identifying and measuring food allergens and pollutants  
Measurements relating to food provenance and fraud

Industry, Science, Energy and Resources



## Who is making food policy in Australia

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In Australia, there are 11 main government departments and agencies that are responsible for food policy.

The **Department of Social Services** implements programs to improve the wellbeing of individuals and families. It works with communities to ensure that food relief organisations are adequately funded to supply food items to emergency relief providers. It was also responsible for providing emergency food relief and support during COVID-19.

The **Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment** (DAWE) develops agriculture policies and programs and manages the export regulatory system. It also sets policies and programs on forestry and fisheries, food waste, and grains research and development. DAWE collaborates with FSANZ to provide advice on which imported foods could pose a risk to public health.

The **Department of Home Affairs** uses their website as a platform to ensure that travellers are aware of rules and regulations surrounding food being brought into Australia. These rules are set by DAWE.

The **Department of the Treasury** ensures fair trading practices for food suppliers and carries out most of its food-related duties through its agency, the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC). The ACCC enforces mandatory codes for the food industry that are prescribed under the Consumer and Competition Act 2010 (Cth.). The ACCC also works with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) to ensure that food

advertising, labelling, and promotion is not misleading or deceptive. FSANZ creates the food standards code which all food items must legally adhere to (including the regulation of ingredients and rules surrounding GM foods). It also sets out mandatory food package labelling requirements, monitors diet related public health risks, supports public health initiatives to aid consumers in making informed food choices, and develops Australia-only primary production and processing standards.

The **Department of Education, Skills and Employment** ensures that information regarding food and nutrition is included in the Australian National Curriculum in years 1-10 of schooling. It also undertakes work relating to food through its agency, the National Measurement Institute (NMI). The NMI identifies and measures allergens and pollutants in foods and conducts measurements relating to food provenance and fraud.

The **Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications** invests in infrastructure that optimises the agricultural freight system. It also worked with DAWE to assist producers in exporting perishable goods during COVID-19. Within this department is the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Australia's broadcast, internet, and telecommunications regulator. ACMA maintains the Broadcasting Services (Australian Content and Children's Television) Standards 2020 which regulate advertising in and around dedicated children's programming and prohibit advertising that contains misleading or deceptive information about the nutritional value of advertised food products.

The **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade** (DFAT) seeks improved international market access for Australian agricultural exporters - this is critical to the economic performance of the food system in Australia, as approximately 65% of agriculture production is exported. DFAT also coordinates Free Trade Agreements

which inform regulations for imported foods.

The **Department of Finance** provides advice on government expenditure, and is responsible for administering the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth.) which applies to Australian government agencies including FSANZ.

The **Department of Health** (DoH) implements various policies and programs to help individuals sustain a healthy diet. The programs are based on research conducted by its agency, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Key programs include: the Health Star Rating System, the Healthy Food Partnership (a voluntary food reformulation program), the Eat for Health Website, promotion of the Australian Dietary Guidelines, and preventative health research initiatives.

## About us

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The [Food Governance Node](#) at the University of Sydney's Charles Perkins Centre is a cross-disciplinary platform to explore the role of law, regulation, and policy in creating a healthy, sustainable and equitable food system.

Pratibha Naudiyal was supported by a summer scholarship from the Charles Perkins Centre. A full version of this report is available on the [Food Governance Node website](#) under "Highlights"



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### Please cite this Brief as:

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Naudiyal, P., Reeve, B., Jones, A. & McDonald, S.  
(2022) *Who is making food policy in Australia*.  
London: Centre for Food Policy, City, University of  
London.