

A National Call to Action:

Secure Australia's Health, Economy and Food Supply



Australia's public health organisations and vegetable growers are united in an urgent call for federal action:

Commit **\$25 million per year** over **five years** (\$125M) to a nationally coordinated, evidence-based behaviour change campaign to boost vegetable consumption - securing a healthier, more sustainable future for all Australians.



The National Health Crisis We Can No Longer Ignore

The daily vegetable consumption of Australians is at an all-time low, now averaging only 1.8 serves (or 135g) per person per day [1]. Alarmingly this number continues to decline year-on-year, and only 6.5% of adults and 4.6% of children meet the recommended daily intake of five serves of vegetables [2].

Overweight and obesity is the number one contributing factor to chronic disease in Australia, overtaking tobacco use and fueling the surge in chronic diseases including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and cancer - accounting for 85% of the national disease burden and strain on our healthcare system [3]. These conditions disproportionately impact disadvantaged Australians, with 94% in lower socioeconomic areas failing to eat enough vegetables [4]. For the first time, younger Australians are expected to live shorter lives than their parents. This is an alarming trend driven by poor diet and falling vegetable consumption [5]. We must take action!

A Coordinated Cross-Sector Response To Grow Consumption

Australia is severely underinvesting in preventive health, with just 1.8% of total health spending directed toward prevention, well below the OECD average of 4% [6]. Without urgent action, we face rising chronic diseases and unsustainable healthcare costs. Increasing vegetable consumption is a vital step in reversing these trends.

Please, help us grow a healthier Australia that is thriving and food secure, by investing to grow daily vegetable consumption by one serve per person by 2030. AUSVEG has the evidence-based response, cross-sector expertise and plan to coordinate this across policymakers, researchers, health organisations and the vegetable industry - improving access to affordable, nutritious vegetables and promoting healthier eating habits for all Australians.



The Impact on Australian Growers

A staggering one in three vegetable growers is considering leaving the industry this year due to declining demand and increasing input costs [7]. With 98% of vegetables sold in Australia grown in Australia, having fewer growers will directly impact domestic supply, leading to reduced access and availability, with higher food costs and greater reliance on imports - further threatening Australia's food security [8].

Boosting daily vegetable consumption by one serve per person per day (75g), will secure Australia's supply - adding 9.1 billion additional serves or 680K tonnes of vegetables consumed per year. The future of our nation's health depends on the vitality of our growers [1]. We cannot afford to lose them.

Increasing the vegetable consumption of Australians by just one extra serve per person per day (75g) will deliver a powerful triple-bottom-line of benefits:



\$1.38B

Healthcare savings

Thriving, healthy Aussie kids, families and communities.



\$3.3B

Vegetable supply chain

Grower and industry economic benefits.



13,000

New Jobs

Sustainable communities and jobs creation.



A National Priority – The Time to Act Is Now

Members of the Parliamentary Committee – comprising Labor and Coalition MPs recognise that lifting vegetable consumption should transcend politics, and is bigger than any one government department, sector, or industry [9]. This is supported by peak health bodies and vegetable growers, collectively rallying to support \$125M investment in an evidence-based, sustained, national behaviour change campaign. With your support, we can:

- Improve health outcomes for all Australians – better mental and physical health, reduced chronic disease incidence
- Strengthen our economy and food security – \$4.68bn economic benefits, \$12.30 ROI for every \$1 invested.
- Secure the future of Australian vegetable growers – a thriving industry with jobs growth for our regions.

The time to act is now. Join us to grow Australian vegetable consumption by Plus One Serve of veg per person per day. It is time for Australia to thrive with the triple bottom line of health, economic, social, and community benefits.

Show your support. Sign the open letter today.



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www.plusoneserve.com.au



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2. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Health Conditions and Risks: Dietary Behaviour*. ABS.
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