

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

## **Canberra Region Local Food Strategy**

### **Talking Points:**

- The [Canberra Region Local Food Strategy 2024-2029](#) (the Strategy) will guide future planning and management of our region's agriculture production.
- The ACT Government commissioned Natural Capital Economics to conduct the *Agriculture and Food in the ACT* study.
- This study collected and analysed a wide range of production and consumption data about the ACT and local region's food system. The results of this study will inform implementation of the Strategy. A report of key findings will be publicly available towards the middle of this year.
- The ACT Government invested \$200,000 in the 2024-25 ACT Budget for the first year of implementation of the Strategy.
- A feasibility study is underway that will investigate options of establishing an ACT food hub to support local food production and consumption within the Territory.
- This feasibility study will include a market demand analysis, key functions determination and prioritisation, location examination, governance options, cost and revenue options, operational diagrams and a risk analysis.
- Key stakeholders involved in ACT agriculture and local food production will be invited to engage in project workshops between April and June 2025.
- A 12-month project is also underway to identify and address policy, planning and regulatory barriers to support ACT farmers to adapt to drought.
- Removing barriers to diversification would potentially enable landholders to explore alternative income sources such as farm tourism and value-added produce.
- This would also potentially enhance farm resilience to climate variability by diversifying income streams and reduce reliance on single commodities. This project is funded by the Australian Government Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program.

### **Key Information**

- The Canberra Region Local Food Strategy launched on 12 June 2024.
- The ACT Government continues to work with the Canberra Region Local Food Strategy's Community Reference Group (CRG) to identify priority actions to support the implementation of the Strategy.

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## Background Information

- The ACT has rural and urban agriculture production.
- There are approximately 160 rural farms which collectively manage 15 per cent of the ACT's land area. The majority operate in sheep, wool and cattle production, horse agistment and other equestrian activities. Other enterprises include eggs, fruit, vegetables, and wine.
- In urban areas there are numerous backyard gardens, a growing number of popular community gardens, and urban farms with vegetable or seedling production.
- There are also enterprises along the food supply chain. This includes farmers markets and direct sale businesses like those offering fresh food and produce boxes, and bakeries, breweries and restaurants that use local produce.
- Although the Strategy is an ACT Government policy to set the strategic direction for the ACT, it is also intended to be used to facilitate connections and collaboration with the wider Canberra region. Despite the existing agricultural enterprises, the ACT is highly reliant on food produced elsewhere and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.