

February 21, 2022

## **Increasing vegetable consumption a priority for Australia's COVID-19 recovery.**

Nutrition Australia and AUSVEG, co-leads of the [Fruit & Vegetable Consortium \(FVC\)](#) are joining forces to make increasing vegetable consumption a national priority for recovery from the COVID pandemic.

[Nutrition Australia](#) and [AUSVEG](#) have shared their key federal election priorities and a unified health-ag sector position to support Australians recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic to eat more vegetables. With Fruit and Vegetable Consortium members and over 250 supporting organisations the group is calling on both sides of politics to invest \$100 million in growing vegetable consumption.

Increasing consumption of Australian vegetables will play an important part in rebuilding our vegetable growing regions and nourishing Aussie kids and their families. It will deliver measurable and wide-reaching improvement to our social, economic and environmental wellbeing for generations to come.

Nutrition Australia Vic CEO and FVC co-Chair, Ms Lucinda Hancock explains, “This type of cross-industry collaboration between the health and agriculture sectors will improve not only health outcomes but also help build resilient regional communities and deliver economic benefits that far outweigh the cost of investment.”

“If Australians ate an extra cup of vegetables every day we would wipe off more than \$200 million per year from our ballooning health budgets.

Increasing vegetable consumption will help lower rates of chronic diseases including certain cancers, diabetes, heart disease, kidney diseases and help us to halt the alarming rise in obesity.”

“With appropriate levels investment and cross-industry commitment to work together we can turn low vegetable consumption around. But we have to act soon. Australians are already eating 13 kilograms per year less vegetables per capita than they did in 2001.”

Michael Coote AUSVEG CEO and FVC co-Chair agrees, “Increasing vegetable consumption will lead to improved health and well-being outcomes, and it will also generate as much as \$1 billion economic value after 11 years to Australian taxpayers and Governments at all levels.

“Not only that, but every new job created in the Australian food industry supports an additional job in the regional economy. More people eating more veggies is good for the economy and our future”.

The Fruit & Vegetable Consortium’s national behaviour change program is projected to deliver a significant lift in vegetable consumption – **an additional 1 serve of vegetables per day** and:

- **+\$200 million reduction in health expenditure** per annum (across state and federal governments)
- **Significant contribution to lower rates of chronic diseases** including certain cancers, diabetes, heart disease, kidney diseases and contribution to halting the rise in obesity.
- **14% reduction in disease burden** if Australians who are overweight or obese maintained a 3kg weight loss
- **+\$1.3 billion increase in vegetable sales volume** to Australian growers and food supply chain operators
- **+\$1.6 billion net economic benefit** in farm income for vegetable growers
- **a \$10 return on investment every \$1 invested** in a behaviour change program to increase vegetable consumption across all sectors of the community
- **an additional job in the regional economy for every new job created** in the Australian food industry

The latest calls for government investment are supported by a compelling business case and evidence base developed by the Fruit & Vegetable Consortium members over the last 3 years. The group has plans to continue their engagement with influential policy-makers across multiple departments and all political parties leading up to the 2022 federal election.

#### **About the Fruit & Vegetable Consortium**

The Fruit & Vegetable Consortium is co-lead by Nutrition Australia and AUSVEG with 10 Executive Members spanning the horticulture and health sectors. For more information on the Fruit & Vegetable Consortium and to find out how you can help make a difference, visit [thefvc.org.au](http://thefvc.org.au).

#### **ENDS**

#### **MEDIA CONTACT**

**For interviews with Lucinda Hancock (co-Chair) or Justine Coates (Managing Director)**

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