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## Australia needs a national food literacy campaign

### Few understand 'food security' despite a majority growing their own

'Food literacy' is desperately needed, as two-thirds of Australians have never heard of 'food security', according to new research published today by the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (AFSA). The AFSA also says that the Federal Government's National Food Plan should build on the renaissance in home food growing to help urban and regional areas become more resilient in a climate-affected future.

In a national survey conducted for the AFSA by the Australia Institute, only 25% of respondents said they thought they understood what 'food security' meant. The survey found that a majority of Australians had no concerns about Australia's food supplies over the next decade. A larger majority (65%) said that they weren't worried about Australia's food supplies over the next fifty years.

"These findings show that a lack of awareness and complacency about the food system is widespread amongst Australians", said AFSA spokesperson and farmer Michael Croft.

"Two years ago the Prime Minister's own Expert Working Group on Food Security stated clearly that 'food security is an issue for Australia'," Mr Croft said. "Another key message of that report was that there was an urgent need to raise 'the importance and awareness of food in the public consciousness'. Federal and State governments have ignored this recommendation. They regard food security purely in terms of exports, and whether we can become the food bowl of Asia."

The AFSA is today calling on the Federal Government, as it continues work on the country's first-ever National Food Plan, to support the introduction of 'food literacy' into schools and beyond. "There are many outstanding examples of food literacy programs in the United States, which we could adapt for Australia, for children and adults", Mr Croft said. Food literacy means 'understanding your connection to the story of the food you eat, from farm to table, and back to the soil'.<sup>1</sup>

The survey also found a majority of Australians (53%) are raising and / or growing some of their own food. While many, particularly older Australians, have been doing so for more than 10 years, 59% began food growing and / or rearing in the last five years, with 19% starting in the last 12 months.

"There is a renaissance of home and community food growing taking place in this country. We urge the Federal Government, in its National Food Plan, to acknowledge this reality, and find concrete ways to support it. The more Australians who are capable of growing or rearing some of their own food, the better placed we'll be to meet the challenges of this century."

For inquiries, please contact Michael Croft: 0413 387 686; or Nick Rose: 0414 497 819. The full report is available at <http://australian.foodsovereigntyalliance.org/blog/2012/07/02/australia-needs-a-food-literacy-campaign/>.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nourishlife.org/learn/glossary-d-f/>