



australian
food sovereignty
alliance

Creating an equitable, sustainable and resilient food future for all Australians

Senator Hon Joseph Ludwig
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600
Australia

By Email: senator.ludwig@aph.gov.au

31st March, 2011

Dear Minister

Food Policy Advisory Working Group

We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 22nd October 2010, in which you advised that a wide range of stakeholders and views would be considered in developing a National Food Plan for Australia. Subsequently, you announced the formation of a National Food Policy Advisory Group in December 2010.

We now urge the inclusion of the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance national spokesperson Michael Croft, of [Mountain Creek Farm](#) (near Canberra), on this Food Policy Advisory Group. As now constituted, this Group's membership is too narrow, and excludes the new ways of thinking necessary to the transformation of Australian food and farming systems. In the formation of policy on such fundamental matters as food and agriculture, a wide diversity of voices, opinions and expertise needs to be heard and acted upon.

The Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (AFSA) speaks to the aspirations of the many millions of Australians – farmers and non-farmers alike - who want a more equitable, sustainable, resilient and democratic national food system. We have set out the vision of such a system in our [Manifesto](#), launched on 10 December, 2010. This is the vision of Food Sovereignty, now a global movement for change embracing hundreds of millions of people in every continent, led by the family farmers' movement, La Via Campesina.

Australian and global food systems are at a critical juncture. Political, farmer, community and business leaders have an unprecedented opportunity to lay the foundations of a national food system that can be truly multi-functional, resilient and sustainable: creating jobs and prosperity; nurturing generations of healthy Australians; caring for the land, its magnificent and diverse ecosystems, and for the people who live and work within them.

The need for bold change is urgent and unavoidable. 'Business as usual', in food and farming, is no longer an option, but that is the mind set of those already appointed to the National Food Policy Advisory Group. Our soils are degrading. Our farmers are in crisis. Our national health is deteriorating – shockingly, the current generation of children will be the first in our history to have a reduced life expectancy, as a result of the obesity epidemic. This would be an appalling legacy to leave for future generations.

Yet a transformed national food system can address all these challenges: it can restore our soils and ecosystems to abundant fertility; it can provide high-quality food for all; and it can do so in ways that guarantee the viability of farmers, so that young people will once again want to embrace agriculture as a career of choice.

AFSA has received direct written endorsement of its inclusion on this Advisory Group from the following diverse array of organisations right around Australia. Collectively these organisations have membership and support bases of more than 500,000 individuals, farmers and non-farmers alike:

Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network

Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network

Australian Farmers Markets Association (150 farmers markets across Australia)

Biodynamic Agriculture Australia

Canberra Food Fairness Alliance

Carbon Coalition

Food Alliance (Victoria)

Food Connect Foundation

Food Irradiation Watch

Friends of the Earth Australia

Gene Ethics

Greenpeace Australia, True Food Network

Healthy Soils Australia

Mothers Are Demystifying Genetic Engineering (MADGE)

Organic Federation of Australia

Queensland Conservation Council

Resources Consulting Services

Slow Food Australia

South Australian Organic & Biodynamic Alliance

Sustain Queensland

Sydney Organic Gardens Pty Ltd

Tasmanian Community Gardens Network

We would welcome the opportunity to brief you and your colleagues directly about AFSA and the unique and deeply participatory perspective we will bring to the Advisory Group.

Yours sincerely

Nick Rose

National Coordinator, Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance