



Julie Collins MP

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Minister for Small Business**

Mr Colin Bettles
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Grain Producers Australia

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Dear Mr Bettles

Thank you for your letter dated 3 April 2025 regarding GPA's 2025 Federal Election Policy Priorities.

The Albanese Labor Government is committed to a robust, sustainable agriculture industry, including the grains sector, that continues to prosper and grow in Australia. Since coming to Government in 2022 we have invested over \$3 billion into the sector while delivering for Australian farmers and producers: strengthening biosecurity, boosting the agriculture workforce, opening new trade opportunities, and improving farm sustainability.

As you would be aware, we recently committed \$3.5 million if re-elected to help secure Australia's food future with the development of a new national food security strategy, Feeding Australia. The strategy will boost the security and supply chain resilience of agriculture and food production systems in Australia and will be developed through a collaborative approach with industry stakeholders. In addition, we will establish a National Food Council consisting of stakeholders across the food system to advise on the development and implementation of the strategy.

Feeding Australia will also include the development of a National Feedstock Strategy to optimise Australia's feedstock production for low carbon liquid fuels. This will help secure Australia's long-term sustainable fuel security.

Fuel tax credits play an important role in ensuring that fuel used as a business input is not subject to taxation. Our position in relation to this remains unchanged.

Since coming to Government in 2022, the Albanese Labor Government has been working systemically to restore confidence, capability and certainty for the APVMA and all chemical users. After years of policy failure under the former Coalition Government, our Government is ensuring the Australian public, our farmers and chemical users have faith in the APVMA as a world-class and independent regulator.

In November last year we delivered our Detailed Response to the APVMA in an effort to address the issues raised across multiple reviews.

We also recently announced \$13 million in funding to support access to effective and safe agricultural and veterinary chemicals. This included an \$8.1 million extension over four years to the Improved Access to Agricultural & Veterinary Chemicals program and one-off funding of \$5.2 million to supplement the APVMA's cost-recovered funding.

The Albanese Government is steadfast in our focus on diversifying and maintaining our global trading relationships. Between July 2022 and December 2024, the Albanese Labor Government recorded 189 market access achievements, including:

- 23 new markets opened
- 78 improvements to reduce code or requirements to export
- 75 achievements to maintain access in the face of threats to trade
- 13 achievements to restore access where it was previously lost

Thanks to our government, we are now exporting our premium agricultural produce to 169 global markets each year – the most diversified trade has ever been.

We are committed to supporting our exporters to pursue opportunities in new markets, including through:

- building stronger economic ties with India;
- negotiating a free trade agreement with the United Arab Emirates
- supporting greater regional trade cooperation, and maximising the gains from recent free trade agreements.

The Albanese Government is also progressing market access improvements for Australian agricultural exports by:

- boosting capacity to negotiate market access with trading partners;
- improving market intelligence to inform export decision making; and
- utilising expanded market access under Free Trade Agreements.

We will continue working hard to advocate for Australian agriculture on the global stage and will not compromise on getting good outcomes for Aussie farmers.

As part of our National Competition Policy agenda, our Government is taking the first steps towards delivering broader 'right to repair' reforms. This will seek to drive down repair costs, increasing business opportunities and reducing wastage by removing barriers to competition for repairs, especially in agriculture and farming. In addition, we are continuing with the review of the Wheat Port Code. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the Code is fit for purpose and supports the future prosperity of our grains industry. Your ongoing engagement in the development of an alternative code model will be critical to its long-term success.

We are investing in rural and regional telecommunications including the recent announcement of \$20 million for the third round of the On Farm Connectivity Program. We continue to respond to feedback from the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee.

Labor has committed to legislating a Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation (UOMO), leveraging new low orbit satellite technology to expand basic voice and SMS coverage nearly anywhere Australians can see the sky. This reform will deliver a significant safety benefit in regional and rural communities, including along regional roads, and farms.

In infrastructure, over \$10 billion went towards regional roads and rail in the most recent Albanese Government budget. We have invested over \$1 billion in regional community infrastructure programs and restored integrity and transparency to grants delivery after the legacy of sports rorts left by the Coalition.

We have implemented reforms to major transport infrastructure, so projects are properly planned and costed, after an independent strategic review found the Coalition left \$33 billion in cost blow outs and scores of projects that did not demonstrate merit. Our reforms mean that states need to undertake rigorous planning on jointly funded projects, and share in the risk. These are smart changes, recommended by an independent review, while still investing the same amount in each state overall.

We've doubled our Roads to Recovery funding to \$1 billion, so every council has double the money to fix potholes and make their roads safer. Last time the Liberals and Nationals were in government, they froze road maintenance indexation for national highways, robbing the regions of millions in road funding. We've reinstated and backdated this.

Labor has worked hard to secure long-term, predictable and sustainable funding to protect our country from biosecurity threats. After chronic underfunding before the Albanese Government came to office, we have committed new biosecurity funding of more than \$2 billion, including over \$1 billion in sustainable, broadly based funding for biosecurity operations and additional funds to address specific threats such as avian influenza. This has reinforced our world-class biosecurity system to protect farmers and all Australians from diseases and pests.

We are funding \$267 million per year ongoing from 2027-28 to strengthen and maintain our biosecurity system into the future. This includes:

- more government funding, now contributing 44% of biosecurity costs in 2024-25.
- more funding from risk creators, with importers and Australia Post contributing 50% of biosecurity costs between them.

We now have importers of both large and small shipments paying their fair share in a way that no government has ever done before. Importers contributed a record \$365 million to our biosecurity system last financial year. We listened to industry and heard that the Biosecurity Protection Levy is not part of the path forward. Nor was the former Coalition government's poorly designed, and subsequently abandoned, Biosecurity Imports Levy.

In addition to ongoing funding into the broader biosecurity system, our government has also invested \$296.4 million over four years to deliver the 2023-27 Red Imported Fire Ant Response Plan.

Thank you again for taking the time to develop your 2025 Federal Election Policy priorities. A re-elected Albanese Labor Government is committed to continuing to support the sector to grow and prosper.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Collins', with a small dot at the end.

Julie Collins MP

30 / 4 / 2025