

27 March 2026



The Hon Anthony Albanese MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

### **Dairy Industry Urgent Consideration – fuel and fertiliser supply impacts**

We are writing to request immediate action to ensure the continuity of fuel supply to Australia's dairy industry in light of emerging and ongoing fuel security risks.

The dairy industry is uniquely exposed to fuel disruption. Milk production, collection and processing operate as a continuous, 365-day system managing a highly perishable staple product and essential raw ingredient.

From on-farm operations and backup generation, through to milk collection across Australia, feed transport and critically, processing and manufacturing, the entire dairy supply chain depends on reliable access to diesel. Current fuel disruptions are escalating rapidly, creating immediate consequences for animal welfare, on-farm safety, processing operations, manufacturing continuity, and ultimately national food supply and retail availability of essential dairy products.

While fuel security frameworks outline mechanisms to manage shortages, they do not explicitly recognise dairy as a priority user within the food supply chain. Without this recognition, the dairy industry is being forced to compete in increasingly constrained fuel markets during this disruption, significantly elevating the risk of lost milk, stranded livestock, environmental damage, processing slowdowns or shutdowns, and disruptions to the supply of fresh dairy products for Australian consumers and global markets.

The Australian Dairy Industry Council, the peak national representative body for the Australian dairy industry, representing dairy farmers and processors, is seeking Commonwealth and State Government support to ensure dairy is appropriately protected within emergency fuel arrangements. Specifically, we are calling for:

- **Pre-designation of dairy as a priority fuel user**, covering farms, milk transport, feed supply and processing and manufacturing facilities, including the ability to move product to market
- **Alignment across jurisdictions**, with dairy embedded in all state and territory fuel emergency response plans

- **Guaranteed access to contracted fuel supply**, ensuring dairy businesses are treated as protected bulk customers in any allocation system
- **Prepared use of emergency direction powers**, enabling fuel to be directed to dairy-critical users where market mechanisms fail
- **Formal recognition of dairy as essential to food security and animal welfare**, reflecting its role as a daily, perishable staple and a critical component of Australia's food manufacturing and retail supply chains.

These actions are practical, proportionate and consistent with the objectives of maintaining essential services, minimising economic disruption, and ensuring equitable fuel distribution during a crisis. They also support continuous food production and processing capability, protect farmer and workforce mental wellbeing, and safeguard the supply of nutritious dairy products for consumers consistent with Australia's food security and public health ambitions.

Given the immediacy of the risks and the potential consequences for dairy farmers, processors and consumers, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss a coordinated approach.

We would also be pleased to work with your government to develop clear, implementable arrangements that ensure the dairy industry can continue to operate through any fuel disruption, including maintaining uninterrupted production, processing and supply of dairy products to domestic and export markets.

I have copied the Minister for Climate Change and Energy and Minister Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and department officials given the implications for national food security and animal welfare.

Please contact Australian Dairy Farmers CEO Stephen Sheridan on 0408 664 841 to make arrangements.

Yours sincerely,



Ben Bennett  
Chair  
Australian Dairy Industry Council



John Williams  
Deputy Chair  
Australian Dairy Industry Council

**CC:**

**The Hon Chris Bowen MP**  
Minister for Climate Change and Energy

**The Hon Julie Collins MP**  
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**Victoria Anderson**  
Secretary, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**Matt Lowe**  
Deputy Secretary  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**Joanna Stanion**  
First Assistant Secretary  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry