

Materiality Assessment Report 2025



About this Report

This report details the approach and results of the Australian beef industry's fourth materiality assessment, which identified the industry's most significant sustainability impacts, risks and opportunities.

This report was prepared by Environmental Resource Management (ERM) and STR Consulting (STR) for Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) on behalf of the Australian Beef Sustainability Framework's Steering Group (ABSF SG).

The assessment was initiated in late 2024 by MLA on behalf of the ABSF. The objective of the assessment was to update the material topics established in 2020 to better reflect current sustainability priorities, risks and opportunities. The assessment used a double materiality approach, evaluating both the beef industry's environmental, social, and economic impacts as well as their implications for negative financial impacts and market opportunities for industry.

The approach was aligned with methodologies of leading standards including the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS S1), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI 3), the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), the associated European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), and the AA1000 Accountability Principles (AA1000).

The assessment's outcomes will inform future strategic updates to the ABSF and its associated public reporting efforts.

Prepared by ERM, STR Consulting, and Meat & Livestock Australia

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Executive Summary

The Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (ABSF) is an initiative of the Australian beef industry to set out the key indicators of performance in sustainability for the beef industry. It enables success to be recognised through evidence-based metrics and empowers the industry to continually improve and demonstrate its values to customers, investors and stakeholders. It shows the industry's intent to be accountable and to accurately tell the story of the Australian beef industry, further underpinning long-term market access.

The ABSF regularly reviews key topics and areas of focus to ensure that it continues to address the beef industry's most significant impacts, risks and opportunities. Conducting a double materiality assessment—which considers both the financial risks to the industry and the environmental and social impacts it creates—offers a range of strategic benefits for the Australian beef sector. It aligns the ABSF with emerging global reporting standards, such as the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), GRI, and IFRS standards, helping to maintain market access and regulatory readiness in global export markets. It also improves risk management by proactively identifying social and environmental risks that could have financial or reputational impacts for the industry.

Beyond risk, a double materiality approach enhances strategic decision-making and increases transparency and credibility with stakeholders. Additionally, it positions the industry to better meet customer expectations related to topics including emissions reduction and animal welfare. Ultimately, a double materiality assessment helps ensure the ABSF remains future-focused, inclusive, and responsive to the evolving regulatory landscape.



Objectives

The key objectives of 2025 materiality assessment were to:

- Review and refine material topics using a double materiality approach to ensure they remain relevant to Australian beef industry and the ABSF.
- Ensure the ABSF continues to align with evolving sustainability standards and frameworks.
- Engage a wide range of key stakeholders to gather input on sustainability priorities, emerging issues, and industry progress.

The report includes detailed insights into the analysis process, project context, and recommendations.

Methodology

The 2025 ABSF materiality assessment followed a structured, multi-phase process, including the following:

- **Phase 1 – Desktop review:** This phase involved an extensive review of key industry strategy documents, governance, public documents provided by MLA, the external landscape, including trends, media review and regulatory changes, and peer assessment. It also involved engagements with other industry representatives.
- **Phase 2 – Stakeholder engagement:** ERM and STR engaged with internal and external stakeholders across the beef industry's value chain. The approach was informed by AccountAbility's AA1000SES Stakeholder Engagement Standard. Over 52 organisations and 78 stakeholders participated through on-line interviews and surveys, with 54% of stakeholders internal to the beef industry.
- **Phase 3 – Identify material topics and define assessment methodology:** Based on the findings of phases 1 and 2 and the key impacts, risks and opportunities identified, an updated list of sustainability topics was developed, and refined. An assessment and scoring methodology was defined and agreed by the ABSF SG.
- **Phase 4 – Perform a double materiality assessment:** ERM performed the materiality assessment to score and prioritise the most relevant sustainability topics for the beef industry, which was reflected in a topic ranking and materiality matrix.

Throughout this process, regular consultations were held with the ABSF SG to ensure alignment with industry needs and stakeholder expectations and sign off on relevant project phases and milestones.

Results

The 2025 ABSF materiality assessment identified a total of **26 sustainability topics**. **Thirteen** topics were classified as **highly material**, indicating their critical importance to the industry's sustainability performance, regulatory compliance, and stakeholder expectations. These are:

- Animal health & welfare
- Biosecurity
- Market access
- Climate change resilience
- Greenhouse gas emissions & carbon capture
- Food safety & quality
- Deforestation
- Livestock transport
- Traceability across the value chain
- Animal husbandry & handling
- Work health & safety
- Rural economic & community contribution
- Productivity and profitability

Benefits to the Australian beef industry:

The updated 2025 materiality assessment provides several key benefits to the Australian beef industry:

- Demonstrating and responding to stakeholder expectations, ensuring that industry reporting and sustainability efforts reflect producer, customer, investor, and regulatory priorities.
- Enhanced market resilience by proactively addressing emerging risks, opportunities and sustainability expectations to maintain export access and industry reputation.
- Strengthen collaboration among multiple industry associations and value chain stakeholders by developing coordinated guidelines that foster synergies and drive collective sustainability efforts.
- More efficient resource allocation, enabling the industry to prioritise investments in areas with the greatest sustainability impact and business risk, ensuring long-term sustainability and profitability.
- Stronger sustainability and ESG integration, linking sustainability performance with financial risk management and aligning with international sustainability reporting frameworks.
- New opportunities for collaboration, expanding partnerships with other agricultural industries and cross-sector sustainability frameworks on challenges which are mutually material.

Recommendations are provided and structured into five groups:

- **Implications for the ABSF:** These recommendations relate specifically to the ABSF's ongoing development of content and attention to the most material topics.
- **Procedural recommendations for the ABSF Steering Group:** These recommendations outline steps the ABSF SG should take to maximise the value of the materiality assessment and its outputs and improve ABSF governance.
- **Collaboration and partnerships for best practice:** These recommendations suggest areas where there are opportunities or where greater cooperation is required either within the industry or with others.
- **Working towards paddock to plate traceability:** These recommendations are focused on enhanced traceability using existing systems and are chiefly based on feedback from stakeholder engagement.
- **Support for the lowest performing 10% of supply chain participants:** These recommendations are also chiefly based on feedback from stakeholders concerned about lifting the performance of the bottom 10% of participants across the industry supply chain.



Background

The Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (ABSF) was established to track and communicate the sustainability performance of the Australian beef industry. It is overseen by the Steering Group (SG), appointed by the ABSF Advisory Board with Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) providing strategic and operational support. The ABSF is designed to engage with key stakeholders—including producers, processors, customers, consumers, and investors—by providing transparent, evidence-based insights into the industry’s sustainability progress.

The purpose of the ABSF is to demonstrate the beef industry’s commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring that Australian beef remains globally competitive, environmentally responsible, and socially sustainable. By tracking key sustainability indicators, the framework helps build trust and confidence in Australian beef production while supporting market access, investment opportunities, and industry resilience.

To remain relevant in an evolving sustainability landscape, the ABSF undergoes an annual evaluation with regular updates to reflect contemporary trends, scientific advancements, regulatory shifts, and changing stakeholder expectations. The framework is structured around four key themes: Best Animal Care, Economic Resilience, Environmental Stewardship, and People and Community. These themes serve as the foundation for industry-wide sustainability reporting and strategy development.

By aligning industry performance with best practices, market requirements, and evolving community expectations, the ABSF plays a crucial role in ensuring Australian beef remains a leader in sustainable production, securing long-term access to global markets and capital investment opportunities.

What is a materiality assessment?

A materiality assessment is a structured process to determine the sustainability topics that present the greatest risks and opportunities to the industry, as well as the topics where the industry has the greatest impacts (both positive and negative) on people, the economy and the environment.

The 2025 materiality assessment provides insights that will shape the strategic direction, risk management approach, and sustainability reporting for the Australian beef industry. Findings from the materiality assessment have several implications, detailed as follows:

- The assessment ensures that industry priorities align with emerging sustainability challenges, stakeholder expectations, and regulatory requirements.
- Identifying key material risks, including market access constraints, evolving regulations, and environmental pressures, allows industry stakeholders to implement proactive risk mitigation strategies. Monitoring sustainability risks, ensuring compliance with trade policies, and strengthening supply chain resilience will help safeguard industry viability.
- The integration of a double materiality approach strengthens industry-wide sustainability disclosures by aligning the ABSF and associated reporting with global frameworks.
- Enhancement of data collection and tracking of material topics will improve transparency, support stakeholder confidence, and ensure compliance with evolving reporting obligations.

As a general principle, materiality assessments are undertaken at regular intervals, typically every two to three years, with annual reviews in the interim to ensure sustainability frameworks and strategies remain aligned with industry developments, evolving sustainability standards, and stakeholder expectations.

Materiality

The 2025 double materiality assessment, conducted in collaboration with ERM and STR Consulting, revisited sustainability topics to reflect shifting stakeholder perspectives, evolving market regulations, and industry dynamics. This assessment introduced a double materiality approach, incorporating both financial significance (the industry's exposure to sustainability-related financial risks and opportunities) and impact significance (the environmental, social, and economic effects of the industry). The approach was aligned with methodologies of leading standards including the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS S1), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI 3), the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the associated European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), and the AA1000 Accountability Principles (AA1000).

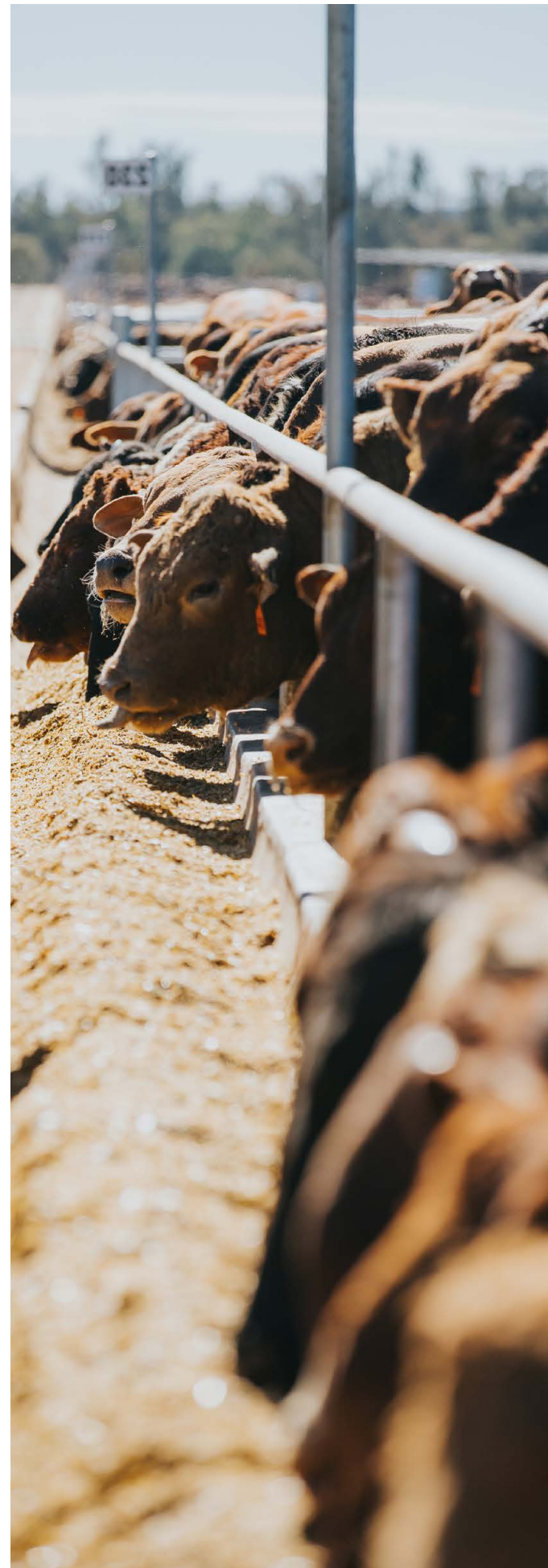
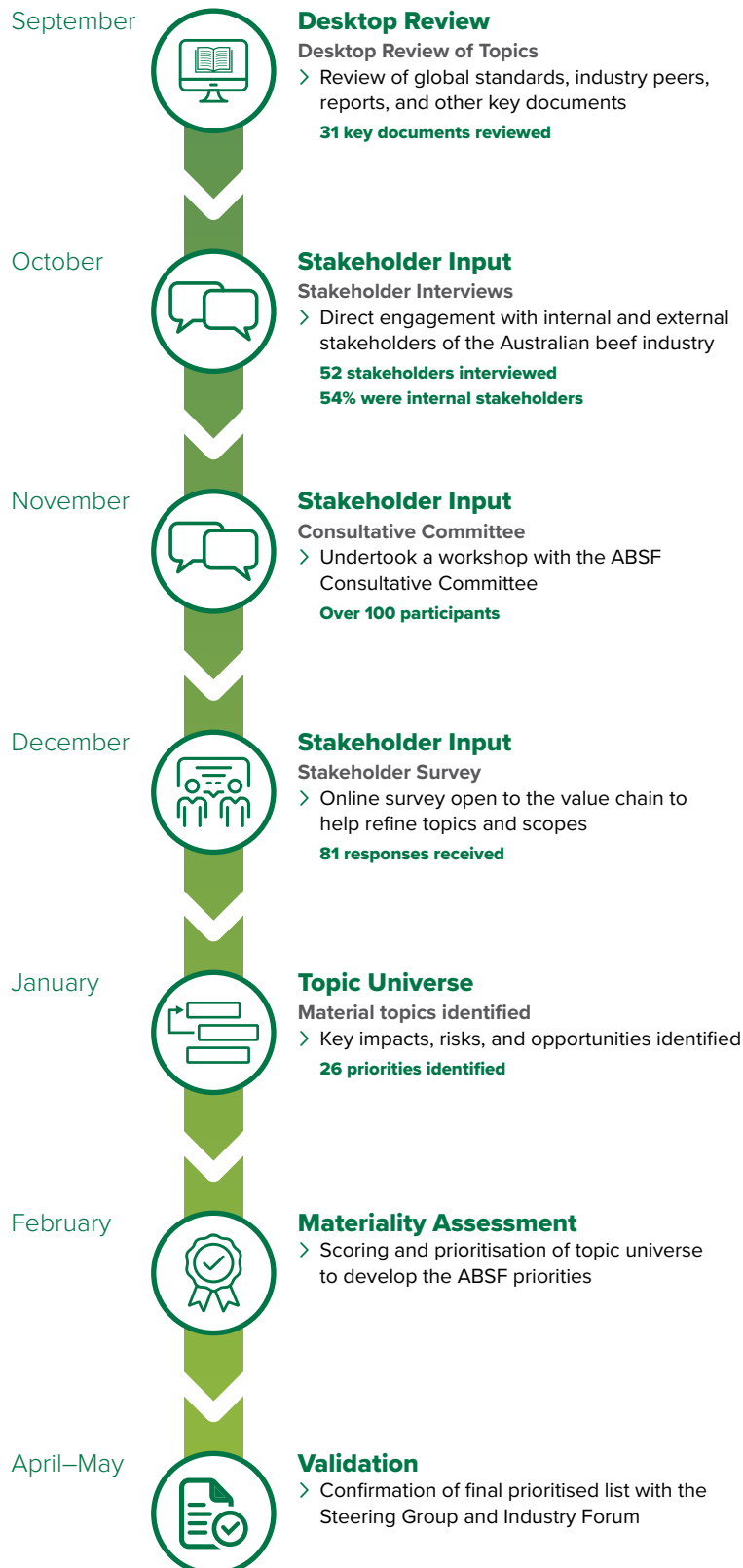
The transition from a GRI-only impact and stakeholder-based approach to double materiality aligns the ABSF with contemporary sustainability standards and global reporting frameworks.

The 2025 materiality assessment project aimed to, specifically:

- Review the 2020 materiality assessment topics and create a refined 2025 set of topics for assessment, reflecting the current sustainability landscape and evolving industry priorities.
- Utilise assessment results to help ensure the ABSF meets the needs of internal and external stakeholders across the Australian beef industry value chain.
- Align with double materiality methodologies, considering both financial significance (impact on the industry) and impact significance (the industry's impact on society and the environment) in order to assess topic materiality explicitly from each of these lenses.



Our Approach



Desktop Review

The first stage in the materiality assessment process was to identify a list of sustainability topics relevant to the Australian beef industry. To identify this broader list of topics, a desktop analysis of documents was undertaken, including:

- Examining MLA and ABSF existing governance, strategies, and risk documentation, including previous materiality assessments, stakeholder insights research (e.g., customers sustainability reports, community sentiment, etc.), and existing industry frameworks.
- Trends from media, consumer behaviour, regulations, and sustainability standards were reviewed.

A peer review was conducted to further analyse sustainability topics and industry sustainability initiatives that have been undertaken by peers across the agricultural sector.

The desktop review resulted in an initial long list of 29 topics that were refined in the following phases. The full list of documents reviewed is available in Appendix 1.

Seeking Input from our Stakeholders

To refine the initial list of material topics, ERM and STR engaged with internal and external stakeholders across the beef industry's value chain to gather insights on key risks, opportunities, and industry impacts on the environment, people, animals, and the economy. Stakeholder perspectives played a vital role in shaping a comprehensive understanding of these issues. The consultation process consisted of three streams of engagements.

- 1. Stakeholder interviews:** Engaged 52 stakeholders across the Australian beef industry and its value chain through one-on-one interviews.
- 2. Consultative Committee:** At the November 2024 ABSF Consultative Committee, ERM engaged with a range of Australian beef industry and value chain stakeholders through a two hour in-person workshop and group activity exercise.
- 3. Stakeholder survey:** An online survey developed to obtain feedback from broader stakeholders and the wider community, which ran for three weeks, receiving 81 responses.

Stakeholder Interviews

Through the stakeholder interviews, ERM collected insights from internal and external stakeholders of the Australian beef industry and related sectors. Interviewees represented a wide mix of industry groups, companies across the supply chain, retailers, investors, special interest groups, and government agencies. A list of the interviewed organisations can be found in Appendix 2. The charts below reflect the split between stakeholder categories.

Figure 1: Proportion of internal industry stakeholders interviewed compared to external stakeholders.

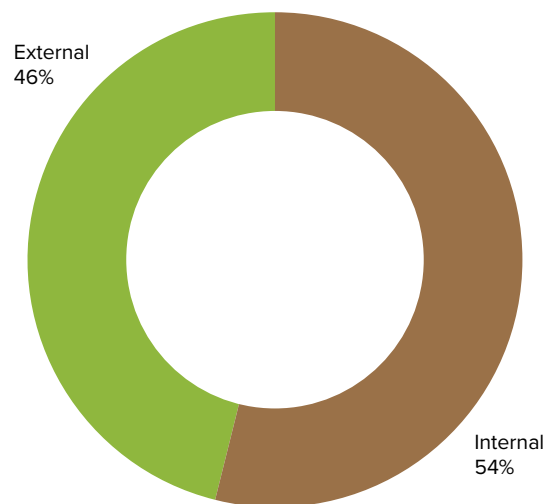
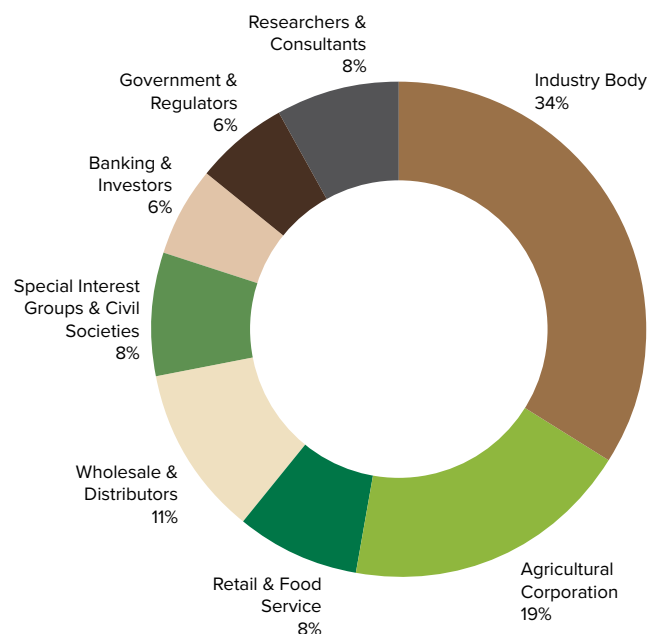


Figure 2: Proportion of different stakeholder categories who were interviewed



Consultative Committee

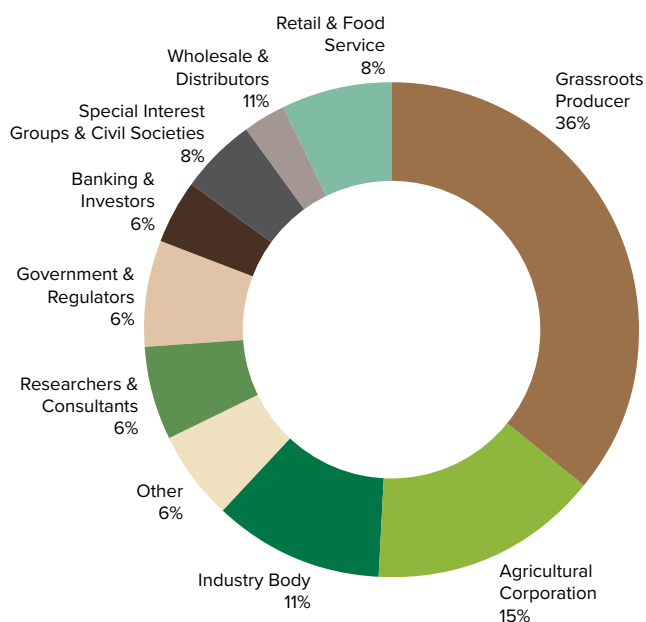
In November 2024, STR and ERM engaged with a range of the Australian beef industry's value chain stakeholders throughout the ABSF Consultative Committee in-person workshop. The ABSF Consultative Committee is an ongoing reference group for the ABSF, established in 2017, which includes representatives from Australian and overseas retailers, banks, investors, environment and welfare NGOs, agribusiness, researchers, government, policy organisations, and industry groups.

The Consultative Committee provided feedback on the preliminary list of material topics and scopes and shared perspectives about relevant impacts and the severity, and likelihood of those impacts.

Stakeholder Survey

An online survey was conducted to gather high-level feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders across the beef industry, including producers, processors, retailers, investors, and policymakers. A total of 81 complete responses were received, representing a broad cross-section of industry groups and ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. The results provided a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder priorities, highlighting areas of alignment and divergence across the value chain, ultimately strengthening the materiality assessment.

Figure 3: Proportion of different stakeholder categories who responded to the online survey.



Stakeholder Summary

Stakeholders largely agreed with the identified topics. A high-level summary of the key themes raised during the engagement is provided below:

Animal welfare

There was broad support for the Five Domains framework, with calls for the greater adoption of best-practice pain relief and measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change on livestock health and productivity. Stakeholders also emphasised the importance of ensuring humane transport practices, including training for drivers and handlers, to minimise animal stress and ensure compliance with welfare standards.

Supporting regional economies

Stakeholders emphasised the important role of the beef industry in sustaining rural livelihoods, particularly in remote areas unsuitable for crop production. Beyond employment, the industry contributes to local economies by supporting schools, healthcare, infrastructure, and community initiatives, including sports clubs and regional events. Its integration into rural communities is seen as essential for long-term economic stability and prosperity, ensuring continued investment in regional growth and resilience.

Biosecurity concerns

Stakeholders expressed strong concerns about the risk of pest and disease outbreaks, particularly the potential spread of foot-and-mouth disease and lumpy skin disease from nearby regions. A single outbreak could have severe consequences for livestock health, market access, and industry reputation. While Australia's biosecurity and traceability systems are robust, stakeholders emphasised the need for stronger collaboration and data sharing across the supply chain to enhance risk management. With growing consumer awareness of biosecurity, a breach could erode trust, disrupt domestic markets, and impact demand for Australian beef.

Traceability and transparency

Stakeholders emphasised that Australia's robust traceability systems are essential for demonstrating compliance with sustainability regulations and maintaining market competitiveness, particularly in relation to EU deforestation laws and animal welfare standards. Enhanced traceability provides greater transparency across the value chain, supporting the industry's sustainability credentials and meeting consumer expectations for ethical and environmentally responsible practices. However, challenges remain in collecting, integrating, and sharing data across the supply chain, with stakeholders highlighting the need for improved coordination to strengthen regulatory compliance and operational efficiency.

Energy efficiency and GHG emissions

Stakeholders highlighted the need to take more action to reduce GHG emissions if the industry still wants to achieve net-zero by 2030, noting that increasing energy efficiency across the supply chain, investing in methane-reducing practices, and adopting renewable energy will be essential to meeting industry commitments, maintaining market access, and enhancing environmental credibility.

Attracting and retaining workers

Stakeholders stressed the need for capacity building and workforce development to equip workers with skills needed to adapt to emerging technologies, innovations, and regulatory requirements. Ensuring a skilled and adaptable workforce is essential for maintaining industry efficiency, competitiveness, and sustainability compliance. Stakeholders noted that attracting and retaining workers requires investment in workforce development initiatives.

Biodiversity conservation

Stakeholders recognised the opportunity for the beef industry to contribute to positive biodiversity outcomes. Stakeholders note that many farmers are already implementing biodiversity enrichment practices, such as revegetation, habitat protection, pest management, and sustainable grazing to enhance ground cover and ecosystem health. Strengthening biodiversity not only supports environmental stewardship but also delivers on-farm benefits, improving animal well-being, productivity, and climate resilience.

Deforestation

Stakeholders viewed the EU Deforestation Regulation as both a risk and an opportunity. While non-compliance by a small number of producers could threaten market access and industry reputation, demonstrating deforestation-free beef production presents an opportunity to strengthen global competitiveness and environmental credentials.



Material Topics

Theme	#	Refined Priority	Definition
 Best Animal Care	1	Animal husbandry & handling	Management procedures and standards of practice consistent with Australian regulations and international best practice, including appropriate action to minimise pain (including euthanasia, injury and disease).
	2	Processing practices	The humane processing of animals at processing facilities consistent with Australian regulations and standards, and international best practice.
	3	Livestock transport	Handling procedures in transport in alignment with Australia's regulations and standards and with international best practice on animal health and welfare.
	4	Animal health & welfare	Ensuring the welfare of livestock along the value chain through the application of the five domains; nutrition, environment, health, behaviour, and mental state; and the maintenance of high welfare standards.
	5	Biosecurity	Managing the risk of infectious diseases, invasive pests or weeds to safeguard the industry, environment, animals and people.
 Economic Resilience	6	Productivity and profitability	The efficiency and economic viability of the beef industry, encompassing farm and processor output value, cost of production, and genetic advancements to enhance herd quality and reproduction. It also includes the industry's rate of return and its impact on operator livelihoods across the beef value chain.
	7	Market access	Increasing market access and addressing barriers to trade through proactive industry investment to address international export regulations including both tariff and non-tariff trade barriers.
	8	Climate resilience	Addressing climate change impacts, risks, and opportunities to ensure long-term economic sustainability and comply with disclosure requirements. This includes preparing for and responding to extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods, and fires which are increasing in both frequency and severity due to climate change. It also involves building resilience to both physical and transitional climate-related risks.
	9	Traceability across the value chain	Improving traceability across the entire value chain, from sourcing and production to processing and trade. This includes safeguarding environmental, animal and social conditions (including human rights), throughout the value chain, enabling transparency and clear communication of sustainability impacts.
	10	Rural economic and community contribution	The beef industry's economic and social impact in rural and regional Australia, including job creation, investment in local infrastructure and essential services, and contributions to Australian communities, including engagements with First Nations Peoples.
 Environmental Stewardship	11	Partnerships & industry collaboration	Establishment of collaborative partnerships between businesses, organisations and government entities across the beef value chain and between sectors to share data, streamline R&D and drive innovation.
	12	Water	Managing and conserving water resources throughout the beef supply chain by enhancing water use efficiency in feed production, livestock processing, and pasture management. This also includes reducing wastage, implementing recycling systems, and adhering to water standards and regulations to minimise environmental impact and ensure water security.
	13	Waste	Solid and liquid waste streams from across the value chain. This includes waste generated across the production processes.

Theme	#	Refined Priority	Definition
	14	Soil health	Soil health including responsible fertiliser and chemical use, soil nutrients, water retention, carbon storage, and topsoil quality.
	15	Deforestation	The impact of the beef industry's land management practices on forests, including adherence to regulations, and promotion of reforestation, as measured by national forest and woodland gain and loss indicators.
	16	Biodiversity	Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of plant and animal species, genetic diversity, and natural ecosystems. This includes controlling and minimising the spread of invasive non-native species. It encompasses the capacity of farmers to contribute to biodiversity enrichment at scale and the protection of remnant native vegetation. Additionally, it recognises opportunities for biodiversity enrichment that promote productivity and animal wellbeing.
	17	Greenhouse gas emissions and carbon capture	Overall greenhouse gas emissions profile associated with beef production, including the generation, mitigation, and sequestration of emissions (e.g. rumination, energy consumption, vegetation management, feed sourcing, sequestration, and soil carbon). This also includes reducing energy consumption across the value chain by adopting more efficient technologies, practices and processes, while incorporating renewable energy generation to further reduce emissions.
	18	Feed base production and pasture management	The approach to developing and utilising high-quality forage, ground cover and pasture resources, optimising plant health and productivity, mitigating the impact of weeds and pests, and sustaining or enhancing the natural capital essential for long-term livestock production.
	19	Feed sourcing	Sourcing of animal feed and the associated impacts of feed production on water stress, local and offshore deforestation, and labour standards, including a strategy to manage opportunities and risks to feed sourcing and livestock supply presented by climate change.
 People & Community	20	Food safety & quality	All aspects of food safety, quality, product integrity, and traceability consistent with standards.
	21	Diversity and inclusion	Commitment to fostering a workplace and industry that values and promotes diversity in beliefs, backgrounds, and identities, while ensuring equitable opportunities, fair treatment, and an inclusive culture for everyone. This includes upholding non-discrimination, embracing gender, cultural, and religious diversity, and supporting First Nations people.
	22	Work health & safety	Healthy and safe conditions for people in the industry (including mental health, occupational injuries and illness, and exposure to chemicals).
	23	Nutrition & food security	Ensuring access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food, with beef serving as a high-quality protein source that supports balanced, healthy diets.
	24	Labour practices	Labour practices and fair work for all workers including freedom of association, safeguarding seasonal and casual workers, and freedom from modern slavery.
	25	Antimicrobial stewardship	Maintaining the efficacy of antimicrobials through responsible use to abate adverse effects in humans and animals.
	26	Workforce development and capacity building	Developing a capable and adaptable workforce by attracting talent, providing diverse career pathways and enhancing training and education programs, particularly during beef production and processing. Therefore, improving employee retention, addressing skilled labour shortages, attracting young workers, and upskilling in technological advancements and regulatory reporting.

Prioritising the Material Topics

The prioritisation of topics was a process that built on insights from the desktop review and stakeholder engagement phases which identified a preliminary list of sustainability topics.

These topics were then assessed using a double materiality approach to assess both dimensions of financial significance and impact significance. The degree of significance influences the level of materiality for both dimensions. This method ensures that the prioritisation of topics aligns with global sustainability reporting standards while also capturing industry-specific risks and opportunities.

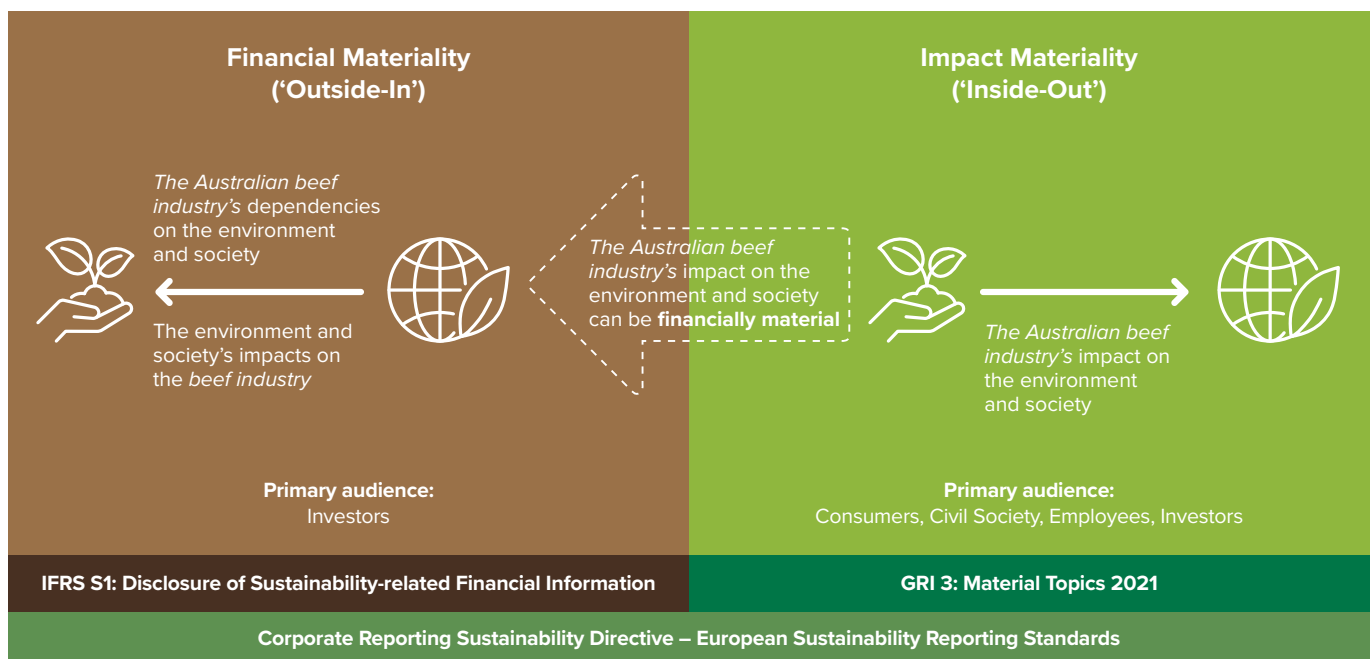
The sustainability topics were evaluated based on the two dimensions and their key significance criteria:

Financial Materiality ‘The financial impacts, and risks and opportunities the industry faces as a result of their dependence on the environment, society and economy’ – Assessment of the financial effects and impacts experienced by the Australian beef industry arising from dependencies on the economy, environment, and society, as well as the risks and opportunities associated with the drivers of financial value creation. Financial significance is assessed by scoring each topic through defined scoring scales for its influence over the drivers of industry value creation and the industry’s dependencies on sources of capital.

Impact Materiality ‘The actual and potential impacts of the industry on the environment, society, and economy over the short-, medium- and long-term’ – Assessment of the actual and potential impacts of the Australian beef industry on the environment and society over the short, medium and long-term, as well as the concerns and interests of stakeholders affected by the industry. Impact significance is assessed by scoring each topic through defined scoring scales for the industry’s impacts on economy, environment and society, and the views of affected key stakeholder groups.

The dimensions of ‘financial materiality’ and ‘impact materiality’ that form the Double Materiality expectation and their links to related standards are summarised in figure 4, below:

Figure 4: Understanding the relationship between financial and impact materiality and associated standards.



Scoring Methods

Financial Significance

Value creation effects: Risks and opportunities impacting value creation or erosion. Five value creation effects categories are considered and scored:

1. Financial effects
2. Strategic effects
3. Operational effects
4. Reputational effects
5. Regulatory effects

Dependencies: Sources of risk and/or opportunity. Dependencies on natural, human and social resources as sources of financial risks or opportunities. Financial dependency across four sources of capital is considered and scored:

1. Human capital
2. Natural capital
3. Produced capital
4. Social capital

Scoring: Financial Materiality assessed by scoring each topic from 1–5 for its influence over the drivers of industry value creation and the industry's dependencies on sources of capital.

Value creation scoring ranges from no measurable or minor short-term impacts (1) to significant long-term impacts (5).

Dependencies scoring ranges from no measurable change in financial dependency (1) to Significant/permanent financial dependency risks or opportunities (5).

Topics scored on the matrix were categorised into three different thresholds of materiality: Important, Material, and Highly Material, to reflect the different potential impacts, risks, opportunities and strategic implications of each topic.

Important – Not material from an impact or financial perspective, but require ongoing monitoring by the industry. These topics may become material over time.

Impact Significance

Impacts: Positive or negative impacts assessed based on Scale, Scope, Irremediability and Attribution. Three impact categories are considered and scored:

1. Impact on environment
2. Impact on people (including human rights)
3. Impact on the economy

Value chain stakeholder interest/concern: How concerned or interested are stakeholders in the topic. Eight stakeholder groups were considered and scored:

1. Ag corporations
2. Industry bodies
3. Wholesaler/distributors
4. Retails/food service
5. Special interest and civil society
6. Research and consultants
7. Government and regulators
8. Banking and investors

Scoring: Impact Materiality assessed by scoring each topic from 1–5 for the industry's impacts on economy, environment and society, and the views of affected key stakeholder groups.

Impact scoring ranges from no measurable or minor short-term impact (1) to significant long-term impacts (5).

Stakeholder concern and interest scoring ranges from awareness amongst few, but no real concern or interest (1) to high level of widespread concern or interest (5).

Material – Topics within this category exceeded the 'material' scoring threshold determined by the ABSF SG for either the financial or impact dimensions (or both).

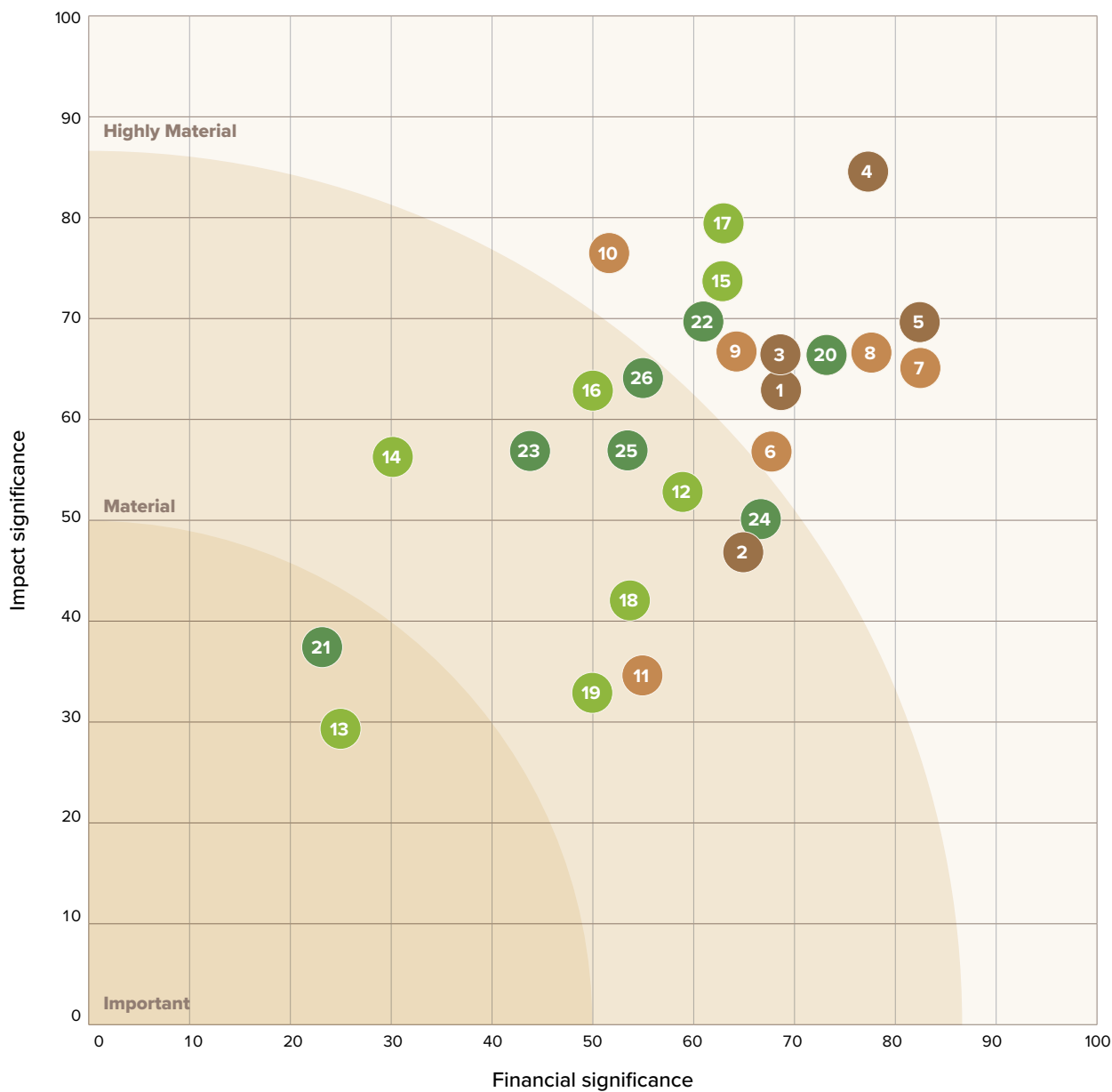
Highly Material – Topics in this category met or exceeded the 'highly material' scoring threshold determined by the ABSF SG for both financial and impact dimensions.

Results

Impact significance		
Rank	Topic	Scores
1.	Animal health & welfare	84.1
2.	Greenhouse gas emissions and carbon capture	79.4
3.	Rural economic and community contribution	76.3
4.	Deforestation	74.5
5.	Work health & safety	69.8
6.	Biosecurity	67.8
7.	Traceability across the value chain	67.0
8.	Food safety & quality	65.4
9.	Climate resilience	65.3
10.	Livestock transport	65.1
11.	Market access	64.5
12.	Workforce development and capacity building	63.7
13.	Animal husbandry & handling	62.9
14.	Biodiversity	62.1
15.	Nutrition & food security	57.6
16.	Antimicrobial stewardship	56.7
17.	Productivity and profitability	55.9
18.	Soil health	55.9
19.	Water	52.8
20.	Labour practices	50.2
21.	Processing practices	47.3
22.	Feed base production and pasture management	42.7
23.	Diversity and inclusion	37.9
24.	Partnerships & industry collaboration	35.6
25.	Feed sourcing	32.7
26.	Waste	29.7

Financial significance		
Rank	Topic	Scores
1.	Market access	81.3
2.	Biosecurity	80.8
3.	Animal health & welfare	78.2
4.	Climate resilience	78.2
5.	Food safety & quality	74.0
6.	Animal husbandry & handling	69.4
7.	Livestock transport	69.4
8.	Productivity and profitability	69.2
9.	Traceability across the value chain	66.8
10.	Labour practices	66.2
11.	Processing practices	64.4
12.	Deforestation	61.8
13.	Greenhouse gas emissions and carbon capture	61.8
14.	Work health & safety	60.6
15.	Water	59.7
16.	Partnerships & industry collaboration	55.6
17.	Workforce development and capacity building	55.0
18.	Feed base production and pasture management	54.7
19.	Antimicrobial stewardship	53.3
20.	Rural economic and community contribution	50.6
21.	Feed sourcing	50.0
22.	Biodiversity	50.0
23.	Nutrition & food security	44.5
24.	Soil health	30.0
25.	Waste	25.0
26.	Diversity and inclusion	23.1

Materiality Matrix



Best Animal Care

1. Animal husbandry & handling
2. Processing practices
3. Livestock transport
4. Animal health & welfare
5. Biosecurity



Economic Resilience

6. Productivity and profitability
7. Market access
8. Climate resilience
9. Traceability across the value chain
10. Rural economic and community contribution
11. Partnerships & industry collaboration



Environmental Stewardship

12. Water
13. Waste
14. Soil health
15. Deforestation
16. Biodiversity
17. Greenhouse gas emissions and carbon capture
18. Feed base production and pasture management
19. Feed sourcing



People & Community

20. Food safety & quality
21. Diversity and inclusion
22. Work health & safety
23. Nutrition & food security
24. Labour practices
25. Antimicrobial stewardship
26. Workforce development and capacity building

Recommendations

To further enhance and strengthen the industry's response to key sustainability focus areas, the following recommendations have been made to the ABSF Steering Group.

Implications for the Australian Beef Sustainability Framework

- Evaluate the existing indicators and narrative approach** used in reporting on topics and compare them with the findings of this materiality assessment to identify any gaps, strengths, and weaknesses. Ensure that the most material topics are the focus of any target setting activity, policy and program development and public reporting on progress. Specifically, this review should determine whether highly material topics—such as *Deforestation*, *Climate resilience*, *Traceability*, and *Workforce development and capacity building* are adequately represented and effectively monitored within the framework.
- Map existing initiatives** by identifying current projects and activities within the industry that address the most material topics. Assess any gaps in coverage and potential responses. This review should also highlight areas where additional effort or collaboration may be necessary in order to tackle emerging challenges effectively.
- Review financial investment and funding allocation** across all material topics to determine if any topics require additional resource allocation or investment.
- Animal Care topics:** Review and refine animal welfare indicators to improve alignment with the Five Domains framework, covering nutrition, environment, health, behaviour, and mental state. Strengthen accountability through enhanced welfare metrics and additional indicators.
- Deforestation:** Engage with major customers, including Fulton Market Group, Woolworths, Coles, and Aldi, to ensure that the ABSF's reporting approach effectively supports customer's ability to meet deforestation-free commitments and Scope 3 emissions reduction targets in both Australian and international markets.
- Feed sourcing:** The industry should recognise feed sourcing as a relevant issue, both from a domestic and international perspective and take proactive steps to fully understand it in the Australian beef industry's operating context. This includes preparing to respond to regulations including the EU Deforestation Due Diligence Directive and mandatory climate risk disclosures, as well as the expectations of major customers.



Procedural recommendations for the Beef Sustainability Framework Steering Group

- **Review online survey results:** Analyse the detailed findings of the online survey and stakeholder insights report, which highlight key differences in topic priorities between industry stakeholders and external groups, as well as regional variations. A deeper examination of these results will help uncover valuable insights into region-specific and stakeholder-specific perspectives.
- **Periodic review of material topics:** Regularly reassess material topics every 2–3 years to ensure ABSF reporting remains aligned with industry priorities and stakeholder expectations. Additionally, consider obtaining third-party assurance to validate the application of the materiality principle, enhancing stakeholder confidence in the reporting process.
- **Monitoring impacts in the value chain:** While this project focuses on topics within the Australian beef industry's direct control and areas of influence, the ABSF should also monitor offshore impacts within the value chain. Even if the industry has limited or no direct control over these impacts, staying informed will help the Australian industry effectively respond to emerging global risks and opportunities across both upstream and downstream segments of the value chain.
- **Expanding stakeholder engagement activities** to include underrepresented groups, such as Indigenous Australians, workers in livestock transport, and regional supply chain participants, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives inform future updates to the ABSF.
- **Prepare for reporting:** Further align key performance indicators and disclosures with international reporting frameworks such as GRI13 to strengthen the credibility and comparability of ABSF reporting.
- **Data collection:** Assist producers and industry operators in expanding data collection and reporting systems to enhance industry tracking of key sustainability topics, including *Greenhouse gas emissions, Deforestation, Soil health, and Biodiversity*. Work collaboratively with MLA and industry stakeholders to improve data consistency and accessibility, enabling industry-wide benchmarking and more accurate reporting.
- **Assurance:** ABSF to consider developing a stated position on external assurance, which might include reliance on other national programs (e.g., ESCAS) and transparency around information that has been externally assured and information that has not.

Collaboration and partnerships for best practice

- **Showcasing best practices:** Use case studies to highlight producer and industry operator achievements in emissions reduction, biodiversity, and land management as models for best practice.
- **Strengthening industry collaboration:** Partner with industry organisations, sustainability initiatives, and research institutions to standardise nature-related metrics and enhance reporting on biodiversity, soil health, and land use.
- **Collaborate with other agriculture sectors** or frameworks on topics and challenges that are mutually material and would benefit from initiatives across multiple sectors (e.g., Feed sourcing, labour standards and safety).
- **Actively seek representation and participate in global discussions** on land management, with a focus on biodiversity, and decarbonisation. Advocate for these discussions to be grounded in the practical realities of the Australian beef industry's operating environment.
- **Work with DCCEEW** and industry bodies on the development of a standardised approach for calculating and reporting cross-industry GHG emissions.
- **Conduct a deeper assessment of human rights and labour practices** within the Australian beef sector to gain a clearer understanding of current performance, key areas of impact, and potential responses to improve labour conditions and human rights protections.

Working towards paddock to plate traceability

- **Explore partnerships with third-party certifiers** (e.g., AUS-MEAT, ISO-aligned auditors) to validate animal welfare, greenhouse gas emissions and the potential for other sustainability-related claims.
- **Work with producers to demonstrate the benefits of traceability** — Show how market access is grown, risks are reduced, and efficiencies are gained through traceability programs. This may include research papers and practical case studies.

Strengthen support, capacity building and education for producers and processors struggling with sustainability reporting requirements

Some industry participants—particularly smaller or resource-constrained producers and processors—are finding it difficult to keep pace with increasingly complex sustainability reporting obligations. Providing tailored training, tools, and practical resources will help these businesses build confidence and capability. Supporting all participants to meet baseline compliance standards not only lifts individual performance but also helps protect the credibility and reputation of the entire industry.

- **Direct on-farm support:** Facilitate peer-to-peer learning by connecting producers with others of similar scale and production systems who have developed strong sustainability practices. This fosters a supportive environment for sharing practical, real-world insights and strategies.
- **Data capability building:** Support resource-constrained producers and processors with the tools and training needed to collect, manage, and report ABSF indicator data effectively. This will enable clearer tracking of progress and contribute to more robust industry-wide reporting.
- **Incentivised progression pathways:** Create long-term, phased incentive programs that acknowledge and reward incremental progress. Ensure these are paired with consistent support to encourage ongoing participation and sustained improvement.



Appendix 1 – Desktop Review Documents

- ABSF – 2020 Materiality Assessment
- ABSF – Materiality Assessment Report 2021
- ABSF – Materiality Data Dive Slides
- ABSF – Sustainability Steering Group (SSG) ToR
- AMPC Annual Operating Plan 2024–2025
- Australian Agriculture Sustainability Framework (AASF)
- EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (EU CS DDD)
- European Union Deforestation Due Diligence (EU DR)
- FAO: The state of Food and Agriculture 2023
- GRI:13 – Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fishing Sectors
- GRSB – 2023 Annual Report
- GRSB – Social Impact Goal 2030
- International markets info (MLA portal)
- LiveCorp's Annual Operation Plan (AOP)
- Live Crop strategic Plan
- MLA – Annual Investment Plan 2024–2025
- MLA – Australian Cattle Industry Projections 2024
- MLA – Code of Conduct
- MLA – Consumer Sentiment Research 2024
- MLA – Consumer Views on Sustainability
- MLA – Media Analysts Report
- MLA – Media Coverage Report
- MLA Organisational Risk Register
- MLA – State of the Industry Report (2022–2023)
- MLA – Strategic Plan 2025
- National Animal Welfare RD&E Strategy 2017
- RD&E Blueprint
- RMAC – Red Meat 2030
- SASB – Poultry, Dairy and Meat industry
- TCFD/ASRS
- TNFD

Appendix 2 – List of Interviewed Stakeholders

- AgForce
- Aldi
- Animal Health Australia
- ANZ
- AUS-MEAT
- Australian Agricultural Company
- The Australian Conservation Foundation
- Australian Farm Institute
- Australian Livestock Exporters' Council
- Australian Lot Feeders' Association
- Australian Meat Industry Council
- Australian Meat Processor Corporation
- Cattle Australia
- Coles
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia
- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
- Consolidated Pastoral Company
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- Farmers for Climate Action
- Fulton Market Group
- Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef
- Greenham
- Harvest Road
- Hewitt Foods
- JBS Foods Australia
- Landcare Australia
- Livestock SA
- McDonalds
- Metcash
- National Australia Bank
- National Farmers Federation
- North Australia Beef Research Council
- North Australia Pastoral Company
- Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
- NSW Farmers
- OBE Organic
- OSI Group
- Rabobank
- RSPCA Australia
- Southern Australia Livestock Research Council
- Starzen
- Stockyard Beef
- Tas Farmers
- Teys Australia
- Turosi Foods Solutions Group
- Victorian Farmers Federation
- Western Australian Livestock Research Council
- The Wilderness Society
- Woolworths
- World Wildlife Fund
- Zero Net Emissions from Agriculture CRC



Australian Beef
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