



CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

SUBMISSION

31 July 2020

Kai Fu
Director
Adjudication Branch
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
GPO Box 3131
Canberra ACT 2601

Via email: adjudication@accc.gov.au

Dear Mr Fu

Re: Draft determination application for authorisation - AA1000477

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the draft determination on the Coles Group Limited's (Coles) application on behalf of itself, Woolworths Group Limited (Woolworths), ALDI Stores (ALDI), and Metcash Limited, for authorisation – AA1000477. Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) previously provided comments regarding the *Coles Group application for authorisation - AA1000477*.

While CCA acknowledges that the ACCC is proposing to grant the authorisation until 31 March 2021, we assert that the issue has evolved and been exacerbated by several factors since the interim authorisation was granted.

The recent reclosure of state and territory borders will require significant monitoring by the ACCC, as these closures pose transport and warehouse logistical concerns resulting in product being unable to effectively move between jurisdictions. This is exacerbated by a log jam of entry point approvals and hard border closures creating supply chain disruption risks.

The interim arrangements put in place to ensure consumers, including the elderly and disadvantaged, have fair and equitable access to retail products resulted in the unintended consequence of many people in regional and remote communities experiencing considerable difficulties in obtaining the variety and quantities of basic essential products they could access prior to these interim arrangements. This has remained the case in many rural and remote communities and CCA is concerned that the draft determination does not provide sufficient assurance that this issue will be rectified.

In regard to 1.9.b.iii and iv,

iii. providing greater access to Retail Products to those most in need (including the elderly and disadvantaged members of the public, such as consumers who may be too unwell to travel to the supermarket); or

iv. facilitating accesses to Retail Products in remote or rural areas

CCA is supportive of these provisions but believe that state governments need to play a greater role in determining those requiring priority treatment. CCA suggest there is the ability for state governments to

intervene if required. The states have the power to deem who is vulnerable and determine these groups as a priority.

Public complacency about the COVID-19 pandemic (CV-19) has increased since initial government responses resulted in early lock down measures. With many of the initial CV-19 restrictions now eased and some disbanded, essential services are scrambling to assess requirements in response to rising infections. CCA suggests that the ACCC monitor the impact that ongoing government responses to CV-19 have on the need for this authorisation.

The product buying restrictions put in place, in addition to the cancellation of online and bulk ordering, severely impacted not only the operational requirements but also the day to day requirements of the many young families who live and work on remote and rural properties. CCA maintains that the country wide limits on purchases be waived for customers that can demonstrate they are buying for a station or belong to a regional or remote community.

If there are any queries about this submission, please do not hesitate to contact our office on 1300 653 038 or email cca@cattlecouncil.com.au.

Yours sincerely



Travis Tobin
Chief Executive Officer