



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Mr Kai Fu, Director, Adjudication Branch
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
23 Marcus Clarke Street
Canberra ACT 2601
e-mail: adjudication@accc.gov.au

Re: AA1000477 – Coles Group on behalf of itself and participating supermarkets – Supermarket Taskforce submission

Dear Mr Fu,

Food security, including ensuring supply to regional and remote communities, has been a high priority throughout the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Supermarket Taskforce, led by the Department of Home Affairs, was established on 18 March 2020 to respond to challenges facing supermarkets arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to coordinate supermarket responses across Australia.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) interim authorisation has allowed supermarkets to work together in certain circumstances to ensure food supply.

Industry cooperating, enabled by the authorisation, has been critical to stabilising consumer confidence, maintaining equitable access to food and minimising negative impacts, including health risks, for supermarket staff and customers. The positive outcomes achieved by the taskforce would not have been possible without the ACCC interim authorisation and the cooperation of the supermarkets covered by the authorisation, along with industry peak bodies.

Whilst the authorisation is temporary and there is evidence that supply issues are easing, the interim authorisation remains of value in managing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response.

As the response to the pandemic continues to evolve, however, we note that the ACCC will monitor market conditions and will no doubt endeavour to return to a normal competitive environment at the most appropriate juncture.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Grigson
Deputy Secretary
National Coordination Mechanism Task Force
Department of Home Affairs
05 May 2020