



M15/130

21 APR 2015

Dr Kathleen Dermody  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Economics Legislation Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Dermody

The NSW Food Authority (the Authority) is grateful for the opportunity to provide input into the Senate Economics Legislation Committee's inquiry into the provisions of the Competition and Consumer amendment (Deregulatory and Other Measures) Bill 2015.

NSW has reliable and effective arrangements in place for reporting and investigating foodborne illness outbreaks. These arrangements operate in NSW through close collaboration between the Authority and NSW Health, with environmental health staff of local Councils, and nationally with Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

Food manufacturers also have a vested interest in providing safe products and keeping their customers satisfied. The Authority is satisfied that manufacturers actively investigate customer complaints, and where appropriate, undertake their own risk assessments and even voluntarily recall product if required. Most product recalls occur in this way.

The requirement typically resulted in 30 to 40 notifications per month in NSW. The Authority reviewed each of these notifications and in almost every instance found that the notification contained no information that required or justified further action. This is because most of the notifications relate to single-case foodborne illness attributed to food products with a national distribution but without sufficient evidence to establish that the product identified actually caused the alleged illness/injury. On the rare occasions where the Authority received more than one notification relating to the same or a similar product, the Authority's investigations have never confirmed an actual problem.

There is no evidence that the mandatory reporting requirement had any beneficial effect on food product safety but instead tied up regulatory resources that could have been deployed more productively.

Yours sincerely

Polly Bennett  
**Chief Executive Officer**