



10 April 2022

Proposal P1053 Food Safety Management Tools – submission from the FSIC Pty Ltd

I am making this submission concerning Proposal P1053 Food Safety Management Tools on behalf of the Board of the Food Safety Information Council.

The Food Safety Information Council is a health promotion charity that educates the Australian Community in safe food handling. We aim to reduce the estimated 4.1 million cases of food poisoning in Australia that result in 31,920 hospitalisations, 86 deaths and 1 million visits to doctors. We have a support network of 50 members who contribute time and sponsorship for our activities, members include the CSIRO, the Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology, Australian Food Safety Centre for Excellence, Dietitians Australia, Environmental Health Australia, Choice, Australian Eggs, the Australian Chicken Meat Federation, and food safety experts from FSANZ and state (except Victoria), territory and local governments.

We have been operating for 25 years educating the Australian Community in food safety using basic food safety culture messages such as correct handwashing, kitchen cleanliness, cooking temperatures, fridge and freezer temperatures, riskier foods, vulnerable groups and food safety in emergencies. Our campaigns are prioritised by our members using science and social science-based evidence.

Our main educational campaign commences each year during Australian Food Safety Week each November and continuing throughout the Summer. This campaign includes TV and radio community service announcements, media and social media, an indigenous radio campaign and videos run in medical centre. We also conduct smaller campaigns on a monthly basis. Recent major campaigns have been evidence based and have followed national priorities such as raw and minimally cooked eggs and poorly handled chicken. National Omnipoll research after the 2021/22 chicken campaign found 25% of Australians recalled the chicken food safety messages and our 2019 campaign on raw and minimally cooked eggs has a 24% national recall of messages.

We support the preferred approach in Proposal P1053 Food Safety Management Tools to amend the Code to require FSS, FHT and evidence to substantiate food safety management for particular business types (Category 1 and 2 businesses). The status quo, and therefore a non-regulatory approach, is considered the preferred option for Category 3 businesses. We

see this as a way to improve food safety culture in Australian society and to protect consumers, while not overburdening food businesses.

We would like to point out that since 1997 our campaigns have improved food safety knowledge among Australians over 35 however our consumer research shows younger Australians continue to take food safety risks. For example, our 2020 national handwashing survey found only 75% between 18 and 34 years said they always washed their hands after going to the toilet (compared with 89% of over 50s) and only 55% between 18 and 34 years said they always washed their hands before handling food (compared with 61% of over 50s). This is a concern as young people will often go on to work as food handlers or care for vulnerable groups in the child, aged care and disability sectors without even the basic knowledge of food safety and hygiene (this is a bit like wanting to be a taxi or Uber driver but not having a driver's licence). For this reason, we have over the last few years included advice in our campaigns that Australians, especially younger Australians, take a food safety course to improve their food safety knowledge and increase their employment opportunities. This also supports the food industry which is facing considerable shortages of qualified staff.

We recognise that there is a considerable way to go in building a food safety culture in Australia and we would be happy to work further with FSANZ and regulators to educate the Australian community in food safety.

Yours sincerely

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