



AUSTRALIAN
**FOOD &
GROCERY**
COUNCIL

AFGC SUBMISSION

FSANZ APPLICATION – A1149
*ADDITION OF STEVIOL GLYCOSIDES IN
FRUIT DRINKS*

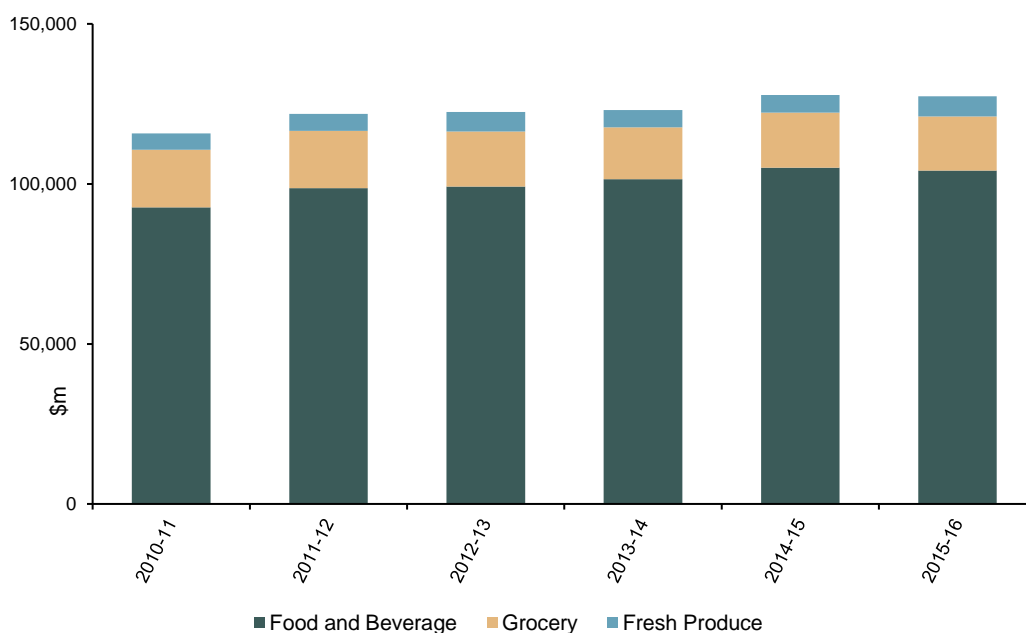
Sustaining Australia

1. PREFACE

The Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) is the leading national organisation representing Australia's food, drink and grocery manufacturing industry.

The membership of AFGC comprises more than 180 companies, subsidiaries and associates which constitutes in the order of 80 per cent of the gross dollar value of the processed food, beverage and grocery products sectors.

Figure 3.1: Composition of the defined industry's turnover (\$2015-16) (million)



With an annual turnover in the 2015-16 financial year of \$127.4 billion, Australia's food and grocery manufacturing industry makes a substantial contribution to the Australian economy and is vital to the nation's future prosperity.

Manufacturing of food, beverages and groceries in the fast moving consumer goods sector is Australia's largest manufacturing industry. Representing 32.4 per cent of total manufacturing turnover in Australia.

The diverse and sustainable industry is made up of over 30,748 businesses and accounts for over \$67.9 billion of the nation's international trade. These businesses range from some of the largest globally significant multinational companies to small and medium enterprises. Industry made \$2.9 billion in capital investment in 2015-16 on research and development.

The food and grocery manufacturing sector employs more than 320,300 Australians, representing about 2.6 per cent of all employed people in Australia, paying around \$17.3 billion a year in salaries and wages.

Many food manufacturing plants are located outside the metropolitan regions. The industry makes a large contribution to rural and regional Australia economies, with almost 40 per cent of the total persons employed being in rural and regional Australia. It is essential for the economic and social development of Australia, and particularly rural and regional Australia, that the magnitude, significance and contribution of this industry is recognised and factored into the Government's economic, industrial and trade policies.

Australians and our political leaders overwhelmingly want a local, value-adding food and grocery manufacturing sector.

2. SUBMISSION

The Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) provides this submission in response to the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) *Application Paper – A1149 Addition of steviol glycosides in fruit drinks*.

The primary justification proposed by the applicant is that permission to use steviol glycosides in fruit drinks would pave the way for more innovative beverage products, which in turn would provide greater choice to consumers, and particularly those seeking to moderate their dietary energy intakes.

The AFGC agrees with this justification noting not only the benefits to consumers but also the alignment of these outcomes with objectives of FSANZ under the FSANZ Act.

The AFGC has reviewed *Supporting document 1: Food technology, hazard and dietary assessment – Application A1149 Addition of steviol glycosides to fruit drinks* prepared by FSANZ and supports the positions expressed therein. FSANZ has conducted an extensive and comprehensive assessment and concluded:

“ ..that there are no public health and safety concerns from the extension of use of steviol glycosides in fruit drinks at the proposed levels of addition.”

The AFGC notes that FSANZ's assessment found that the application should be supported on the grounds that:

- steviol glycosides are essentially safe for human consumption at the levels proposed, and overall dietary assessments do not suggest any adverse health effects would result
- an anomaly regarding the naming of reduced sugar beverages would be corrected, and
- there is a technological justification for the use of steviol glycosides in fruit drinks in the amounts and forms requested by the applicant.

The AFGC supports FSANZ's decision to extend the use of steviol glycosides to fruit drinks at a MPL of 200 mg/kg steviol equivalents.

Therefore, the AFGC recommends that Application 1149 be supported.