



Darrell Channing
Director
Competition Exemptions
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

By email
Cc Miriam Kolacz

Coles Group Limited – Application for authorisation AA1000606 Interim authorisation decision

Dear Mr Channing,

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. On 18 March 2020, the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) established the Supermarket Taskforce 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) has previously provided participating supermarkets authorisation for similar conduct as that sought under this application. The Department provided submissions in May 2020 and in April 2021 in support of these applications, noting they have provided industry and government with the flexibility to collaborate in response to COVID-19 related impacts and coinciding disruptive events. While the Department defers to the ACCC on competition implications, the authorisations have enabled the necessary collaboration to maintain Australia's essential food supply chains throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

After two years, industry and government are transitioning to COVID-19 being a business-as-usual activity. Part of this transition process includes the reinvigoration of the Food and Grocery Sector Group in the Trusted Information Sharing Network, a cross-sectoral collaboration mechanism operated by the Department. In this group, supermarkets and a wider membership of the Australian food and grocery sector can collaborate to build their resilience to respond to any crisis.

In the event of future disruptive events, the Department would continue to support authorisations that enable industry and government to unify and collaboratively respond to support food security.

Yours sincerely,



Sam Grunhard
First Assistant Secretary
Cyber and Infrastructure Security Centre
Department of Home Affairs

