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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
Inquiry into the impact of microplastics and other toxics on human health
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

**RE: Inquiry into the Impact of Microplastics and Other Toxins on Human Health
Senate Community Affairs References Committee - Submission from Food
Standards Australia New Zealand**

Dear Committee Secretary

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee inquiry into the impact of microplastics, nanoplastics and other persistent chemicals on human health.

As the independent statutory authority responsible for developing and maintaining food standards in Australia and New Zealand, FSANZ has a central role in assessing potential food-related risks to public health and safety using rigorous, internationally recognised risk-analysis principles. Emerging contaminants such as microplastics are an area of active scientific interest and public concern, and FSANZ recognises the importance of ensuring that policy responses in this area are grounded in the best available evidence.

Based on its assessment of the current scientific literature, FSANZ considers microplastics and nanoplastics in food to be an emerging issue rather than an established food safety risk. At present, the evidence does not indicate that dietary exposure to microplastics at environmentally relevant levels poses a public health and safety concern. Critically, there remain substantial scientific and methodological limitations, including the absence of harmonised analytical methods, insufficient exposure data, and a lack of toxicological evidence demonstrating adverse health effects relevant to human dietary exposure.

These limitations mean that food regulatory agencies globally, including FSANZ, are currently unable to reliably quantify dietary exposure or establish health-based guidance values or maximum levels for microplastics in food. Without these foundational elements, the establishment of enforceable food standards would not be scientifically robust nor practically effective.

FSANZ acknowledges the Committee's particular interest in vulnerable populations, including infants, children and pregnant women. While theoretical concerns regarding early-life exposure have been raised in the scientific literature, FSANZ notes that there is currently a lack of human data linking dietary microplastic or nanoplastic exposure to adverse developmental or reproductive outcomes. FSANZ continues to apply a cautious, evidence-based approach in its consideration of emerging contaminants that may affect sensitive life stages, recognising both the importance of protecting vulnerable populations and the need for regulatory decisions to be grounded in robust, reproducible scientific evidence.

Beyond microplastics, FSANZ has undertaken extensive work on other persistent chemicals in the food supply, including per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and other packaging-related chemicals. This work has demonstrated that dietary exposure to these substances in Australia is very low and does not pose a public health and safety concern for consumers.

FSANZ actively monitors and contributes to the work of international bodies such as the World Health Organization, Codex Alimentarius Commission and overseas food safety regulators. International consensus is consistent in concluding that current evidence does not support the establishment of health-based guidance values or regulatory limits for microplastics in food, and that further targeted research is required, particularly in relation to exposure assessment, particle characterisation and toxicological relevance. FSANZ supports continued national and international research efforts to address these evidence gaps and stands ready to provide technical advice should governments seek to explore future regulatory or non-regulatory risk-management options. FSANZ will continue to monitor emerging evidence closely and provide independent, science-based advice to food ministers and the broader food regulatory system.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sandra Cuthbert
Chief Executive Officer
Food Standards Australia New Zealand
6 March 2026