

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS
PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

QoN Number: CV19-25

Subject: NCM work on food processing facilities

Asked by: Janet Rice

Question:

What work has the National Coordinating Mechanism done on food processing facilities?

Answer:

The Commonwealth established the Supermarket Taskforce (the Taskforce) on 18 March 2020 to respond to challenges facing supermarkets arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Taskforce and its associated working groups work collaboratively across Australian, state and territory government agencies, and with major supermarkets, retailers and industry associations, to ensure all Australians can access food, and do so safely.

The Taskforce engaged across government agencies to ensure that food supply issues raised by supermarkets were addressed with producers, manufacturers and suppliers. This included working with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, industry peak bodies and specific food manufacturers to address supply issues. The Supermarket Taskforce continues to address specific issues as they arise.

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PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Select Committee on COVID-19

QoN Number: CV19-26

Subject: Analysis on supply chain resilience

Asked by: Janet Rice

Question:

What analysis has the NCM undertaken on supply chain resilience within Australia?

Answer:

The Commonwealth established the Supermarket Taskforce (the Taskforce) on 18 March 2020 to respond to challenges facing supermarkets arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following discussion between government and industry, the Taskforce identified and worked collaboratively to manage both systemic and specific issues relating to the food and grocery supply chain during the pandemic. The Taskforce responded to a range of domestic and international supply chain issues, including:

- Removing barriers to international border clearances
- Identifying and managing issues relating to food supply to remote and rural areas
- Agreement to industry-wide approaches to store opening hours
- Resolution of barriers to domestic freight to resupply stores more quickly, including trucking curfews and State and Territory border restrictions
- Prioritisation of home delivery, click-and-collect and a range of other innovative services to ensure vulnerable Australians can access food, especially if isolating at home
- Development of hygiene guidelines and capacity limits for supermarkets
- Introduction of an industry-led limit to alcohol purchases.

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Select Committee on COVID-19

QoN Number: CV19-27

Subject: Food security

Asked by: Janet Rice

Question:

What analysis has the NCM undertaken on food security within Australia? Which supplies constitute the greatest point of food vulnerability?

Answer:

The Commonwealth established the Supermarket Taskforce (the Taskforce) on 18 March 2020 to respond to challenges facing supermarkets arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Taskforce has worked with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the Department of Social Services, peak bodies and not for profit organisations such as Foodbank, to address food security concerns within Australia. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) released a report *Australian food security and the COVID-19 pandemic* on 17 April 2020, which highlighted that while the unexpected surge in demand has resulted in temporary shortages of some products, including rice, pasta and flour, Australia does not have a food security problem.

The Taskforce continues to focus on food security in regional and remote communities, and supermarket support for vulnerable people.