

Comments from Victorian Departments of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, and Health and Human Services

Due date of submission – 19 December 2016

The Victorian Departments of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, and Health and Human Services (the departments) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on Application A1132 - Broaden definition of steviol glycosides (intense sweetener).

Application A1132 seeks approval to expand the definition of steviol glycosides for use as an intense sweetener to include all steviol glycosides extracted from the *Stevia rebaudiana* Bertoni leaf (stevia leaf).

From the FSANZ assessment report it is understood that:

- The applicant seeks to amend the current definition of steviol glycosides to include all minor steviol glycosides extracted from the stevia leaf. The applicant has identified approximately 40 steviol glycosides, including the 10 steviol glycosides currently permitted as food additives in Standard 1.3.1 in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code).
- The applicant claims these minor steviol glycosides provide improved flavour and taste compared to the currently permitted steviol glycosides.
- The risk and technical assessment report explains that no evidence was found to suggest that an expanded definition of steviol glycosides for use as a sweetener poses any public health and safety risks. The applicant intends to market steviol glycoside mixtures for use as intense sweeteners under the same conditions as those presently approved for steviol glycoside preparations and as such no additional dietary exposure is anticipated. The departments note that the Acceptable Daily Intake of 0-4 mg/kg body weight is applicable to all steviol glycosides in stevia leaf.
- The departments note that permissions for steviol glycosides under Codex, the United States of America, the European Union and Canada do not include the minor steviol glycosides. The applicant has submitted an application similar to the FSANZ application to Health Canada.
- The Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) has established a new tentative specification, which captures the separation of steviol glycosides from the stevia leaf, anticipated to be complete in 2018. The specifications for steviol glycosides will be addressed in a variation to Schedule 3 of the Code which may be removed once the JECFA tentative specification is finalised. The departments seek FSANZ's confirmation that the JECFA specification is unlikely to disagree with that proposed in the variation.

The departments note the Application seeks to expand the definition of steviol glycosides for use as an intense sweetener to include all steviol glycosides extracted from the *Stevia rebaudiana* Bertoni leaf and is supportive of this amendment. The departments support the progression of Application A1132.