

Comments from the Victorian Department of Health and the Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.

Due date of submission – 4 June 2021

The Victorian Departments of Health and Jobs, Precincts and Regions (the departments) welcome the opportunity to respond to this application to amend the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code).

Application A1218 - β -Galactosidase from *Bacillus subtilis* (Enzyme) seeks to permit the use of the enzyme β -galactosidase derived from a genetically modified (GM) strain of *B. subtilis*.

From the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Assessment report it is understood that:

- β -Galactosidase from *B. subtilis* (the enzyme) is proposed to be used in the production of lactose-reduced dairy foods. The enzyme would not perform a function in these products, and therefore meets the requirements of a processing aid.
- The enzyme is derived from a genetically modified strain of *B. subtilis* containing the β -galactosidase gene from *Lactobacillus delbrueckii* subsp. *bulgaricus*.
- The safety of *B. subtilis* has previously been assessed by FSANZ and the Code currently permits several enzymes derived from the organism.
- The enzyme has received approvals for use as a processing aid in France and Denmark.

It is also understood that, if no genetically modified DNA or novel protein will remain in the food treated with the enzyme, there are no 'genetically modified' labelling requirements for use of this enzyme when used as a processing aid in the production of food.

On the basis of the information above and FSANZ's conclusion that there are no public health and safety issues associated with the use of β -galactosidase from the genetically modified *B. subtilis* as a processing aid, the departments support the progression of Application A1218.