

Application 1243 Harmonisation of marine biotoxins standards for bivalve shellfish

NSW Submission

General Procedure – the 1st call for submissions (CFS)

NSW Food Authority appreciates the opportunity to comment on Application 1243 (A1243) – Harmonisation of marine biotoxins standards for bivalve shellfish. The submission does not represent a NSW Government position, which will be a matter for the NSW Government should notification be made by the FSANZ Board to the Food Ministers' Meeting.

NSW Food Authority supports the proposed amendments of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) to align the maximum levels (MLs) for diarrhetic shellfish toxins (DST) and paralytic shellfish toxins (PST) in bivalve molluscs with MLs established by Codex.

Internationally aligned MLs will ensure an internationally consistent approach to the consideration of DSTs and PSTs in bivalve molluscs.

Review of NSW data from routine biotoxin testing over the last 5 years has revealed no occasions where the existing PST and DST limits in the Code were exceeded, however if these events would have occurred with the stricter Codex values in place, 4 sample exceedances would have occurred over this timeframe. These were mostly sourced from pipi's (known to accumulate DST) and one event where mussels were sampled following a harvest area closure.

NSW Food Authority is also an active member of the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Advisory Committee (ASQAAC). In accordance with the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program, the NSW Shellfish Program, includes routine biotoxin monitoring under the NSW Marine Biotoxin Management Plan, to ensure safe consumption of molluscan shellfish in NSW.

ENDS

The views expressed in this submission may or may not accord with those of other NSW Government agencies. The NSW Food Authority has a policy which encourages the full range of NSW agency views to be submitted during the standards development stages before final assessment. Other relevant NSW Government agencies are aware of and agree with this policy.

Dated as 16 August 2023