

Australia strengthens food and grocery code

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The Australian government is taking steps to strengthen the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct. This follows a recent independent review of the Code as part of a broad crackdown on anti-competitive behaviour in the food and grocery sector, to provide a fair deal for families and farmers.

The government will ensure that supermarkets are as competitive as possible so Australians can benefit from the best prices. It aims to address anti-competitive behaviour in the supermarket sector and ensure fairer prices for consumers.

According to the statement, Dr Craig Emerson was commissioned to review the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct to ensure that it protects suppliers and fosters a competitive grocery sector that benefits Australians. The review found that the current voluntary Code has failed to address the power imbalance between supermarkets and their suppliers, including farmers. Suppliers have expressed concerns about potential retribution from supermarkets if they raise issues or exercise their rights under the Code.

The government has committed to implementing all of the review's recommendations, including making the Code mandatory for all supermarkets with an annual Australian revenue of over \$5 billion, strengthening formal and informal dispute-resolution mechanisms, introducing penalties for serious breaches of the Code, creating an anonymous complaints mechanism within the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, addressing the fear of retribution, and improving outcomes for suppliers of fresh produce.