

# Allergen Bureau

## An update on Allergens: What's happening?

Jasmine Lacin-Lee  
Allergen Bureau Director / BVAQ  
FIAQ 16<sup>th</sup> Food Safety Conference  
June 2021

Informing the  
food industry



# Our Membership

- Membership based organisation established to provide food industry with rapid responses to questions about allergen risk management in food ingredients & manufactured foods
- Pre-competitive, 'not-for-profit', Allergen Bureau directors provide voluntary, unpaid services.
- Great example of cooperation amongst competitors in the food industry

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ALDI Stores  
BBF Hull Limited  
[Lindt & Sprüngli Australia](#)  
[SoFine Foods](#)

Global Members



Full Members



## Vision & Mission

**Vision:** A trusted food supply for allergen sensitive consumers around the world.

**Mission:** Lead the global food industry in best practice allergen management, sharing information that builds trust and transparency that supports allergen sensitive consumers to make informed choices.

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A top-down view of a person's hands holding a white tablet. The tablet screen is black with white text. The background is a grey, textured surface.

Virtual Tour:  
2020 - 2021  
Global & Local  
Food Allergy  
Updates

# Global Clinical View – the latest update

- Prevalence of food allergy sensitization in Australia since 1990's to 2017 has remained stable, although anaphylaxis reaction have increased
- Rate of food allergy incidence in many countries appears stable
- Global increase in hospital admission
- Global decrease in fatalities due to anaphylaxis



# Foods associated with anaphylactic reactions

- Cows milk attributed to 1:4 fatalities in children in the UK (26% versus peanut at 14%)
- Top allergens globally are cows milk, peanut, crustacea, tree nuts
- Regional differences globally



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# How does this translate to Australia?

- 1 in 10 infants clinically diagnosed with food allergy
- Egg, cows milk, peanut, tree nuts – most common in children / Fish and Shellfish in adults
- 22 fatalities between 1997-2013: 50% due to seafood, followed by peanut, tree nut, cows milk and wheat
- Most reactions occur away from home

<https://allergyfacts.org.au/allergy-anaphylaxis/food-allergy>

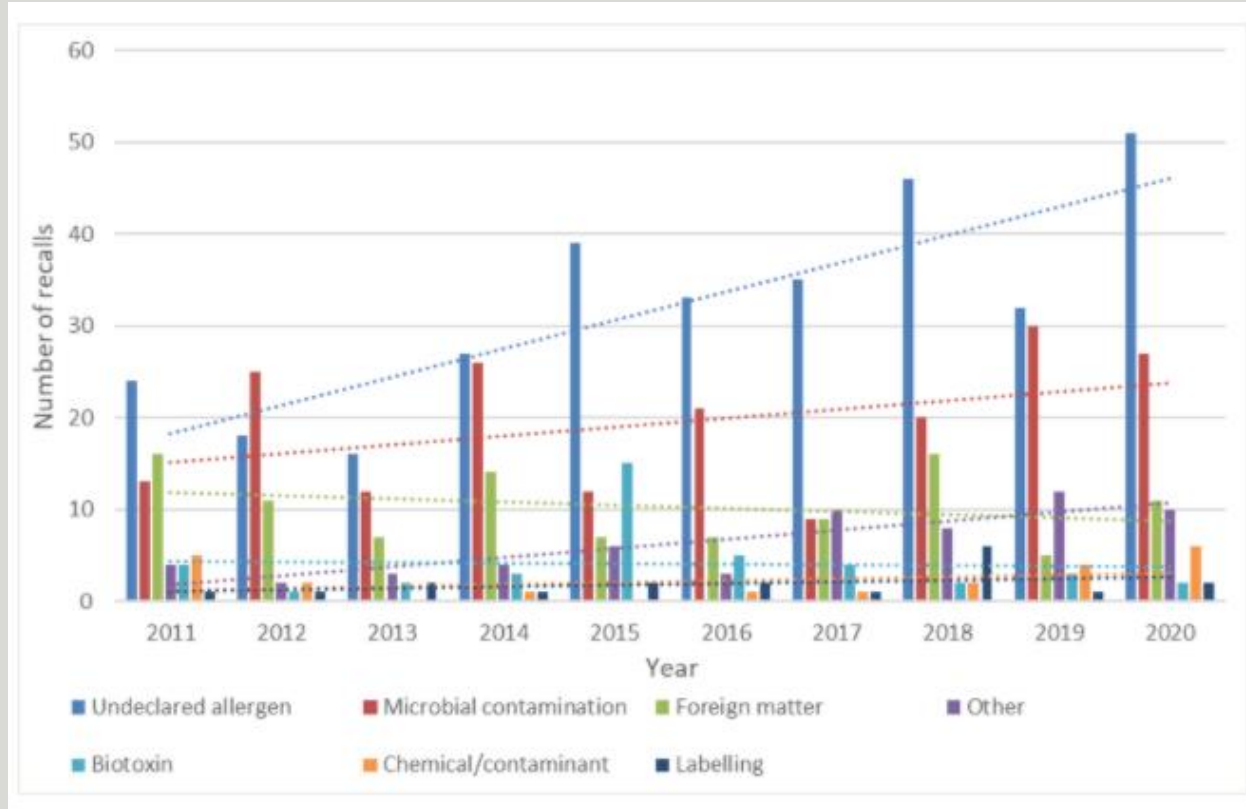
Increase in anaphylaxis fatalities in Australia from 1997 to 2013 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/cea.12748>

# Victoria Hospital Admission Data

- November 2018 – December 2020 (n=4,272)
- 60% (2,658) related to food (unpackaged, packaged, other)
- Packaged foods
  - Most reactions are in children
  - Many are first time reactions
  - In many instances labelling is correct
- Unpackaged foods = teens and young adults
  - Allergy not disclosed is largest contributor
  - 2 deaths related to this category



# Australia Recall Data - Where are we?



Australian  
Recall Statistics  
2011-2020

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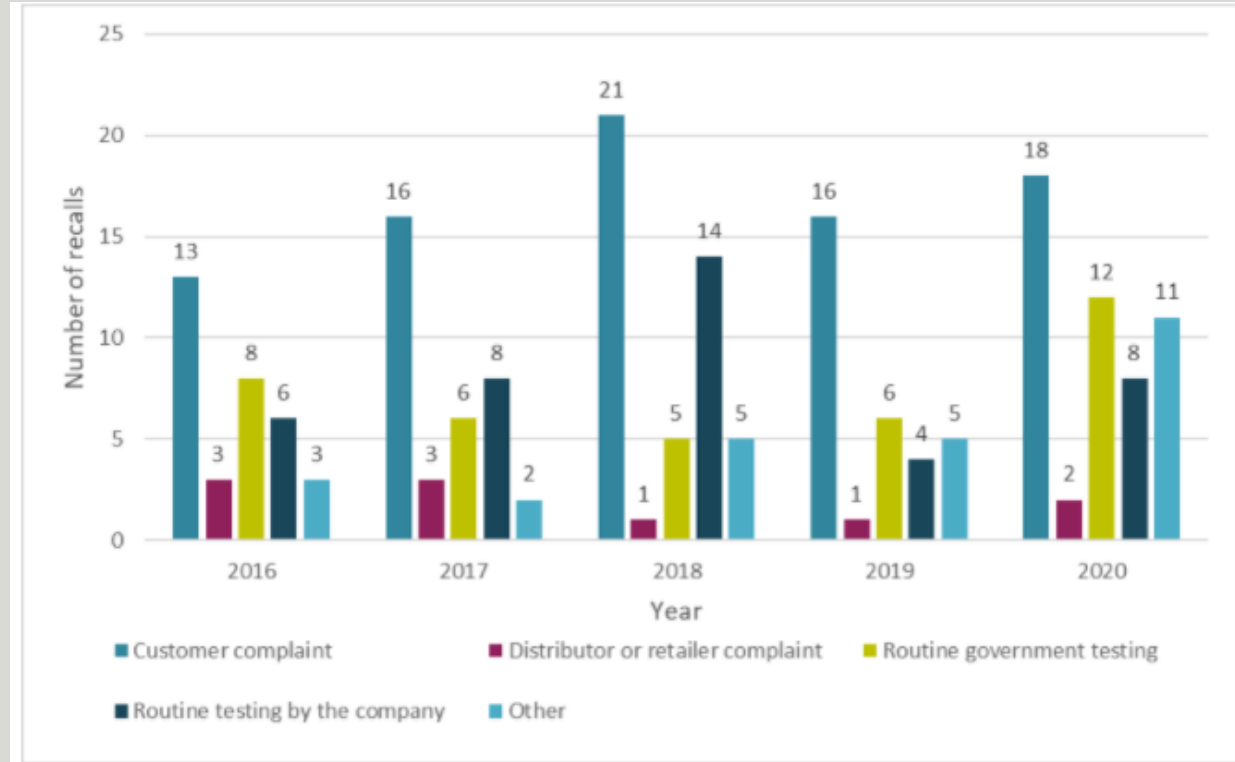


3  
CATEGORIES



# What do the allergen related recalls tell us?

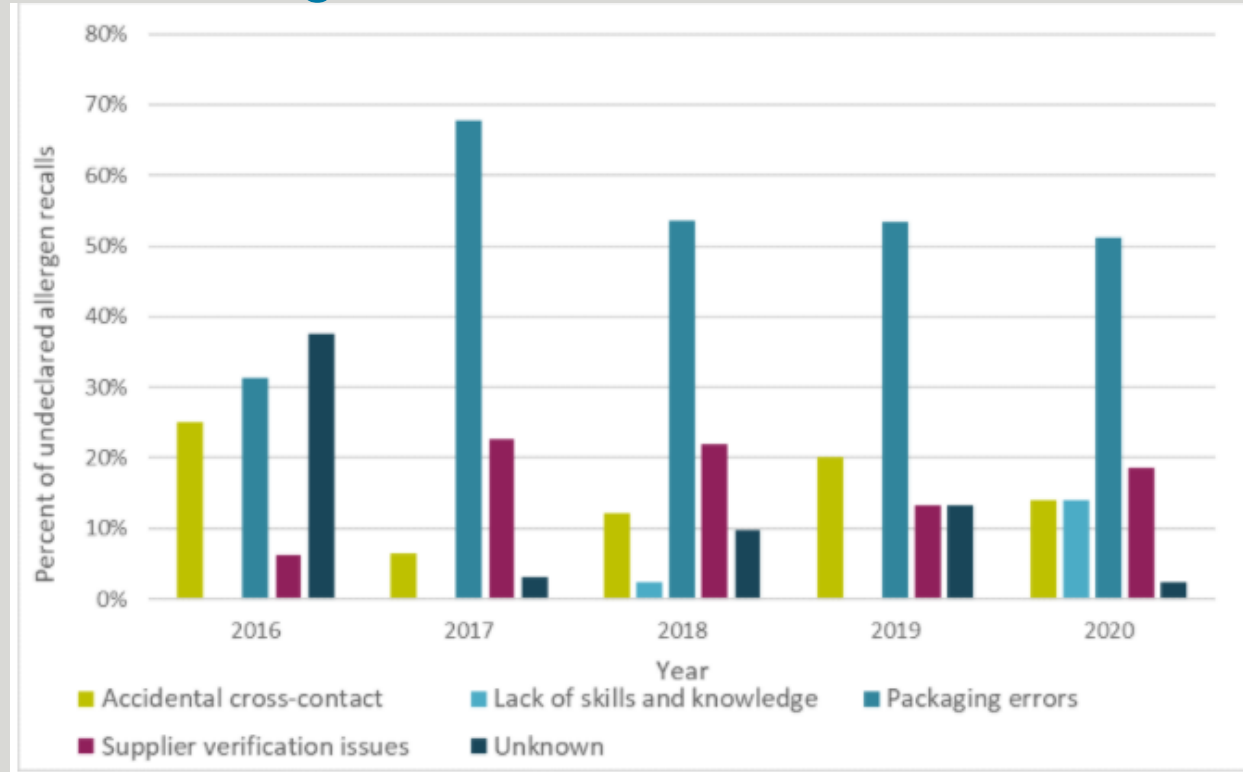
## Food Allergen Recall Statistics 2016 - 2020



Detection of the problem

# What do the allergen related recalls tell us?

## Food Allergen Recall Statistics 2016 - 2020



Contributing  
Root Causes

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# What is behind these recalls?

- Lack of regulatory labelling understanding
- “Free From” and Vegan market sector increasing
- Increased label compliance screening
  - Companies
  - Regulators (including councils)
- Supplier verification issue
- Incorrect label information
- Wrong product – wrong pack



# What's there to help me?



# 3 Step Industry Guidance Page

*Easy*  
Step-by-step  
industry  
guidance

1

3

2

*Informing the food industry*

1. Food Industry Guide to Allergen Management and Labelling for Australia and New Zealand – PEAL updated edition;
2. Allergen Bureau's Allergen Risk Review website;
3. Food Industry Guide to the Voluntary Incidental Trace Allergen Labelling (VITAL<sup>®</sup>) Program.





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Figure 3. Examples of summary statement loc

Preferred format - the summary statement is by

**Ingredients**  
Water, vegetable  
stickener (1412),  
flavour (wheat ma  
Contains: egg, al

Alternative formats - the summary statement is

**Ingredients**  
Water, vegetable oil, vinegar, Contai  
sugar, formalin paste, egg,  
cappicum, salt, egg yolk, almon  
stickener (1412), almonds, milk,  
parmesan cheese (milk), wheat,  
garlic, wheat flour, flavour, gluten  
wheat maltodextrin, sesame  
oil, antioxidant (202).

Alternative format for labels with very limited  
between the statement of ingredients and the su

**INGREDIENTS:** Water, vegetable oil, vi  
paste, capicum, salt, egg yolk, sticken  
parmesan cheese (milk), garlic, wheat  
maltodextrin, sesame oil, antioxidant (2  
Contains: egg, almond, milk, wheat,

#### Terminology

The required names for summary statement  
for soybean and cereals containing gluten,  
same as those in the statement of ingredier  
are listed in Column 4 of the table to section  
The following example shows how the requ  
can be presented in a statement of ingredie  
summary statement using the required nam

Example: Ingredient list for Frozen Green V  
Mix:

**Ingredients**  
Green beans, sugar snap peas, edamame  
(soybean).

**Contains:** soy.

Note that soy, soya and soybean are requir  
in the statement of ingredients, but not in th  
statement where soy is the only permitted n  
name.



## 2021 Food Industry Guide to Allergen Management and Labelling

For Australia and New Zealand

PEAL  
updated

A partnership document of the  
Australian Food and Grocery Council and the Allergen Bureau

# Essential allergen guidance for the ANZ food business operator



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# New Allergen Labelling Requirements (PEAL)

- “To make allergen information clearer and more consistent, including through the use of plain English”
- Changes to the declaration of wheat and cereals; tree nuts and molluscs
- see [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)

## Standard 1.2.3 Information requirements – warning statements, advisory statements and declarations

### Food Standards (Proposal P1044 – Plain English Allergen Labelling) Variation

Item [3] of the Schedule	197	F2021L00145 24 Feb 2021 FSC138 25 Feb 2021	Clause 4	Clause 4 a transitional arrangement for the Code made by Item [3.1], [3.2], [3.5] of the Schedule.  The transition period is the period commences on 25 February 2021 and ends on 25 February 2024.  The post-transition period is the period commences 26 February 2024 and ends on 25 February 2026.
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# Updated to reflect PEAL

- format, location & terminology requirements are in the Code
- preferred format for industry consistency
- statement of ingredients declare allergens using required names in bold
- summary statement are mandatory
- PAL statements (when determined through a science based risk assessment process) are important

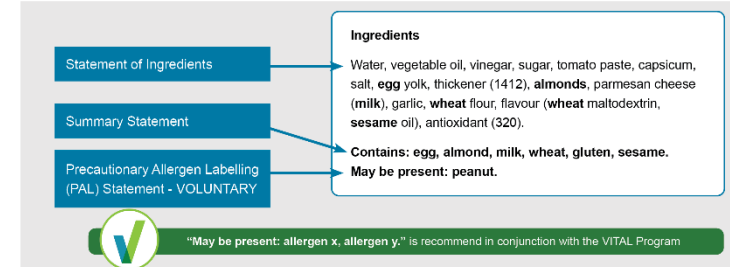
## 4.1.1 RECOMMENDED ALLERGEN LABELLING FORMAT

In this Guide an 'ingredient list' is a collective term which represents up to three labelling elements.

1. a mandatory statement of ingredients (refer to Code Standard 1.2.4 *Information requirements – statement of ingredients*); and
2. a mandatory summary statement (refer to Code section 1.2.3—4 *Mandatory declarations of certain foods*); and
3. a voluntary precautionary allergen labelling statement (refer to section 4.1.11 in this Guide).

The three elements work together to provide consumers with clear and consistent allergen labelling.

Figure 2. The allergen labelling elements of an ingredient list.



## 4.1.2 UNDERSTAND THE ALLERGENIC NATURE OF INGREDIENTS

To declare ingredients that are (or contain) allergens accurately, FBOs should be aware of the nature of the ingredients used in their products. In addition to allergens being present in ingredients, components in compound ingredients, additives and processing aids, allergens may also be present from carry-over, agricultural co-mingling, or cross contact. For more information, refer to the Allergen Bureau's Unexpected Allergens in Food which is a document that provides the food industry with a list of foods, ingredients and raw materials that may unexpectedly contain allergens, and a list of questions FBOs can ask their suppliers to support their allergen risk review process.

**In Australia and New Zealand, regardless of the nature of the allergen, in most cases, if it is present in a food for sale, it must be declared.**

Apart from sulphites, the allergens listed the table to section S9-3 are proteins. Depending on the food processing method, proteins can change (for example, denaturation due to extreme pH or heating). It should

not be assumed that normal food manufacturing processes will make the proteins less allergenic. Foods and ingredients that contain denatured proteins can still trigger an allergic reaction in a consumer with food allergy. Also, if manufacturing processes result in the allergen protein not being detected by analytical means, it cannot be assumed that the allergen is not present. An example is a fermented food where the allergen may be difficult to detect using some analytical methods because the structure of the protein has changed.

Some ingredients undergo processes which remove most of the allergenic proteins. Unless these ingredients meet the requirements for an allergen labelling exemption, the allergenic source of these ingredients must be declared irrespective of how highly refined or processed they may be. An example of a material that can be highly processed is wheat, where wheat declaration would apply equally to wheat flour, wheat starch, wheat maltodextrins and caramel derived from wheat.

**UNEXPECTED  
ALLERGENS IN  
FOOD**

Revised & updated  
January 2021

*Informing the food industry*

[allergenbureau.net](http://allergenbureau.net)

**Essential  
allergen guidance  
for those involved in  
Vendor Assurance,  
Raw Material  
Approval & NPD**

# Unexpected Allergens in Foods

- Original edition - 2011
- Version 2 – issued January 2021
- Updates include:
  - Additions to unexpected allergens associated with foods and ingredients
  - Inclusion of Agricultural Co-Mingling section
  - Inclusion of a Food Fraud section
  - Inclusion of Case Studies – examples of agricultural co-mingling

# What is Agricultural Co-mingling?

- When different grains, seeds or pulses are co-mingled together during cultivation, primary processing, storage and transportation of commodity crops
- This is of concern when allergens are identified
- Can occur through:
  - *different crops being grown in close proximity with each other*
  - *sharing the same fields due to crop rotation;*
  - *and/or sharing the same equipment/facilities for harvesting, transport and storage*

**Table 1: Unexpected allergens associated with foods and ingredients**

Food	Details
Soy Sauce	Does it contain <b>wheat</b> (in addition to <b>soy</b> )?
Spice extract(s)	Do they contain any bases, carriers, anti-caking agents (e.g. maltodextrin, flour, oleoresins, emulsifiers)? If yes, what are they derived from (e.g. <b>wheat</b> , maize, <b>soy</b> , <b>egg</b> etc.)?
Spice(s)	Do they contain any bases, carriers, anti-caking agents (e.g. maltodextrin, flour, oleoresins, emulsifiers)? If yes, what are they derived from (e.g. <b>wheat</b> , maize, <b>soy</b> , <b>egg</b> )? Refer to Table 2 (Allergens associated with agricultural co-mingling).
Stabilisers	What are they derived from (e.g. <b>soy</b> , <b>egg</b> , cereals containing <b>gluten</b> )?

Examples provided by industry, for industry

**Table 2: Allergens associated with agricultural co-mingling**

Food	Details
Dehydrated garlic	<p>What is the geographical origin of the garlic? Refer to Case study - Crop rotation practices can impact upon ingredient allergen status.</p> <p>What other crops are used for crop rotation by the grower? Does the farming source crop rotate with <b>peanut</b>?</p> <p>What other crops are being (or can be) grown nearby?</p> <p>What crop measures are in place to effectively remove physical remains of other crops?</p> <p>How is the garlic (fresh or dehydrated) traded/sourced (e.g. through general markets with lesser known controls; contracted farms; controlled Backward Integration programs)?</p>

# A New Website Platform

Introducing our new & improved corporate website [allergenbureau.net](http://allergenbureau.net), & brand-new website platform for [VITAL® Online](#).

- interactive news & events pages
- easy search functions
- updated industry FAQs
- conference presentations
- free helpline service



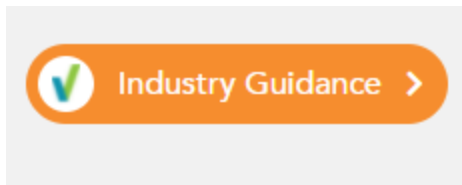
## Allergen Bureau

Supporting industry to manage the risks of food allergens in the interests of consumers.





# A New VITAL Online Calculator & Portal



# VITAL Program Version 3.0 and supporting documents

The Food Industry Guide to the  
**VOLUNTARY  
INCIDENTAL  
TRACE ALLERGEN  
LABELLING  
(VITAL®) PROGRAM**

Version 3.0

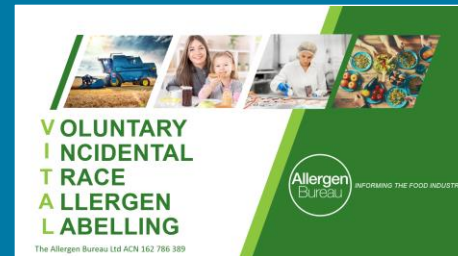
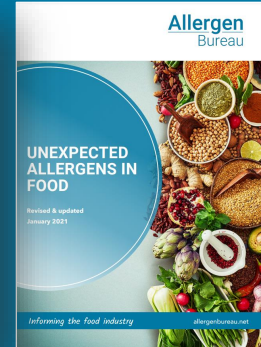
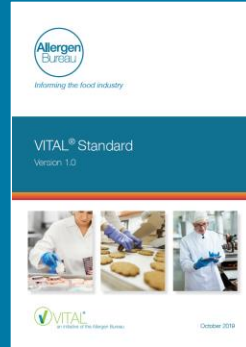


April 2021

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PEAL updated

allergensbureau.net



# Parliamentary Inquiry into allergies & anaphylaxis

Outcome recognised the integrity of VITAL program.

## Recommendation 15:

The Committee recommends that the Allergen Bureau in collaboration with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), work with the food industry to encourage the consistent use of the VITAL food allergen risk assessment program, including the introduction of a VITAL 'V' tick on packaging to inform consumers that a product has been through this process.

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PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

## **Walking the allergy tightrope**

*Addressing the rise of allergies and anaphylaxis in Australia*

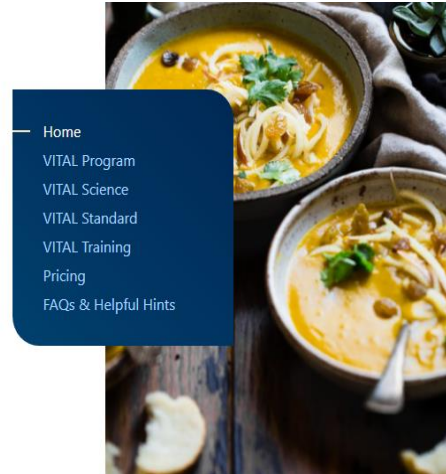
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport

May 2020  
CANBERRA



# VITAL – One Step Further

- Food Category Consumption data rather than nominated reference amounts?
- Another level of consistency and robustness
- Working group activity



## Voluntary Incidental Trace Allergen Labelling

The Allergen Bureau's VITAL<sup>®</sup> (Voluntary Incidental Trace Allergen Labelling) Program is a standardised allergen risk assessment process for food industry.

# Recent Codex Updates

- Code of Practice on Food Allergen Management for Food Business Operators – Adopted 2020
- General Principle of Food Hygiene – updated 2020 to include allergens



# What does the future hold?

## *FAO / WHO Expert Consultation on Risk Assessment of Food Allergens*

- To inform Codex Committee on Food Labelling
- Proposed changes to global priority allergens
  - Remove soy, lupin, mustard, celery, oats, molluscs, brazil nut, macadamia, pine nuts and sulphites
  - Consider region specific allergens
  - Pulses, insects and other foods (kiwi) added to “watch list”

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# What does the future hold?

## *FAO / WHO Expert Consultation on Risk Assessment of Food Allergens*

- Review and establish threshold levels in foods of the priority allergens
- Review and evaluate the evidence in support of precautionary labelling

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# Allergen Bureau

## Contact Us

Free Allergen Bureau Helpline

email: [info@allergenbureau.net](mailto:info@allergenbureau.net)

Phone: +61 437 918 959 (International)

[www.allergenbureau.net](http://www.allergenbureau.net)