

Comments from Department of Health, Victoria

Due date of submission: 21 August 2014

The Victorian Departments of Health and Environment and Primary Industries (the Departments) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on Proposal P1029, a proposal to make permanent the maximum levels (MLs) of the neurotoxin 'tutin' permitted in honey under the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (the Code).

The Departments are informed that:

- the source of tutin (the New Zealand native shrub *Coriaria arborea* or tutu) is confined to New Zealand (NZ))
- all 34 tutin in honey poisonings reported since 1980 have occurred in NZ
- NZ requirements around prohibiting harvesting of honey from high tutin risk areas (2008 NZ Tutin Standard) were difficult to implement and;
- the NZ Food (Tutin in Honey) Standard 2010 sets options for honey packers to demonstrate compliance with the MLs in the Code.

The Victorian Government was supportive of the 2009 introduction of temporary MLs for tutin in honey, and of the two subsequent extensions of those temporary MLs (up to 31 March 2015), as an interim risk management measure, pending the completion of further research and risk evaluation.

The Departments support the progression of this proposal to introduce permanent MLs for tutin in honey, based on the results of that further research and evaluation provided in the risk assessment report (SD1).