



46th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Nutrition Society of Australia, 29 November – 2 December 2022, Sustainable nutrition for a healthy life

# Decolonising food regulatory frameworks to facilitate First Peoples food sovereignty

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As interest in Australian native products continues to grow world-wide, there is an emergence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (First Peoples) who are striving to be industry leaders in the production of their traditional food products that are being developed for commercial markets.<sup>(1)</sup> To successfully gain market approval and ensure these traditional foods are safe for consumption within the general population, both Australian and global food regulatory authorities require at least a documented history of safe use. Moreover, many countries require compositional analysis and safety data to further support safe human consumption. Despite this, safety data is lacking for many of these traditional food products and the history that surrounds their safe use has rarely been recorded in written form, but rather passed on through cultural practices and language. This presentation will give a brief overview of the current state of the Australian native foods industry, including details of where First Peoples are currently positioned within the industry and what an Indigenous-led native foods industry may mean to the First Peoples of Australia. The current regulatory frameworks that are used to direct the dietary risk assessment of novel foods, including traditional foods, will be highlighted and the suitability of these frameworks for assessing the dietary safety of traditional foods will be examined. Through consultation with policy makers and First Peoples stakeholders, a novel framework approach has been developed to address the food safety regulatory hurdles that are currently felt by Indigenous-led businesses who are attempting to enter the Australian native foods industry. Examples will be presented on how this new framework will be supported by building the evidence base around the dietary safety of a range of traditional foods that are currently being developed for commercial markets by various Traditional-Owner groups. Ultimately, combining the practical ecological knowledge held by the First Peoples and their communities with rigorous dietary safety studies, including compositional analysis should satisfy safety concerns held by Australian and global food regulatory bodies. Altogether, this research aims to promote the safe consumption of traditional foods within the general population, whilst also promoting First Peoples leadership in every stage of the commercial production of traditional food products. The goal of this research, and associated presentations, is to actively bring together the research sector, government regulatory bodies, and the broader food industry with a range of First Peoples stakeholders to begin facilitating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander food sovereignty through an Indigenous-led native foods industry.

## References

1. Maclean K, Woodward E, Jarvis D *et al.* (2019) CSIRO