

MEDIA RELEASE

Date of release: 1 March 2013

Embargo:

ALLIANCE SAYS COUNCIL COULD HAVE DONE BETTER

Waverley councillors who voted in favour of a new supermarket at Bondi Beach have highlighted where their true allegiance lies — not with small to medium local food business or Australian farmers, but with the big food corporations.

Despite opposition by Bondi residents and small business, the February meeting of Waverley Council approved the supermarket with opening hours between 6AM and 1AM, but did not approve the associated liquor store.

Commenting on the approval, Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance spokesman and farmer, Michael Croft, said: "It is common knowledge that supermarkets outcompete small, local business with long trading hours, by cutting prices and by using their economic power to dominate retail in areas where they open for business. They also contribute to traffic congestion with a significant number of large delivery truck movements and by generating shopper traffic.

"By supporting the supermarket proposal, Waverley Council prioritises the wants of a supermarket duopoly that controls around 80 percent of the Australian food retail business and that stands accused of unfair and bullying practices in regard to its suppliers, including Australian family farmers and food processing businesses.

"Council's vote in support of the proposal is a vote not only against small local business, which will face increased competition from a major corporation, but against Australian farmers and food processing businesses who will see their already-inadequate income fall further because the supermarket duopoly prefers to import up to a quarter of their products rather than support Australian producers and companies.

"Council could have done much better", he said. "There is great potential for local government to put local business first and to build the regional economy. It is a pity that Waverley council has decided against doing this".

The Council decision comes after the recent release of a survey of Australian attitudes towards the supermarket duopoly. The survey, conducted for the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance, disclosed that a large majority of Australians — 75% — believe that the dominant share of the domestic grocery market held by Coles and Woolworths, Australia's largest supermarket chains, is excessive. The attitude to supermarket domination of Australia's food business was shared by supporters of all political parties, and was especially strongly held by National Party and Greens supporters.

Waverley Council's support for the supermarket duopoly come as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) begins its inquiry into allegations of the bullying of producers and suppliers by the duopoly.

Mr Croft said shoppers vote to support a business by spending their dollars there. If people in Bondi want to support local business then they should make their food purchases from those businesses rather than at the supermarket.

"A dollar is like a vote," said Mr Croft. "By spending it at a business you vote to support that business rather than some other. By spending your dollar at small, local food retailers in Bondi, local people can vote against the supermarket".

Mr Croft said that the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance has recently released their People's Food Plan working paper that proposes the diversification of Australian food retailing rather than locking it all up with the supermarket duopoly. He said that diversity opens opportunities for small business where big corporate interests like the supermarket duopoly reduce choice and opportunity for local business enterprise.

FOR INTERVIEW:

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INFORMATION:

- **AFSA:** australianfoodsovereigntyalliance.org
- **People's Food Plan:** australianfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/2013/02/16/peoples-food-plan-working-paper-launched/
- **Opposition to the Bondi Beach supermarket:** rescuebondi.good.do/truck-off/pages/our-objection-letter/