

22 October 2025

Chairperson
Petitions Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington
parliamentary.petitions@parliament.govt.nz.

SUBMISSION on Consumer NZ Petition calling for a mandatory Supermarket Pricing Accuracy Code

1. Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to make a written submission on Consumer NZ's petition calling for a mandatory Supermarket Pricing Accuracy Code.

This submission is from Consumer NZ, an independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to championing and empowering consumers in Aotearoa. Consumer NZ has a reputation for being fair, impartial and providing comprehensive consumer information and advice.

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We are happy to speak to our submission.

2. Price it Right campaign

Consumer NZ launched its "Price it Right" [campaign](#) in July 2025. As part of our campaign, we started a petition on our website calling for a supermarket pricing accuracy code with clear pricing rules, higher penalties for misleading pricing and promotions, infringement notice powers, and automatic compensation for consumers when supermarkets

get their pricing wrong ('Code'). We obtained 25,523 signatures on the petition.

In August 2025, we lodged an official petition calling on the House of Representatives to urge the Government to introduce the Code and noting that 25,523 people signed our petition.

3. Background to our campaign

Despite it being an offence to mislead consumers about the price of goods under the Fair Trading Act, we continually receive complaints about inaccurate and misleading supermarket prices.

In September 2022, we called on the public to send us examples of the 'dodgy specials' they'd seen at the supermarkets. From September 2022 to the end of June 2023, we received over 600 complaints from disgruntled shoppers. Our research also found that 62% of New Zealanders had noticed a pricing inaccuracy at the supermarket.

In July 2023, we lodged a formal complaint with the Commerce Commission, which initiated investigations into both Woolworths NZ and Foodstuffs for false and misleading pricing and promotional practices. That complaint led to criminal charges being filed against Woolworths NZ and two Pak'nSave stores. The two Pak'nSave stores pled guilty to 18 misleading pricing charges in July 2025: 10 charges for Pak'nSave Silverdale and 8 for Pak'nSave Mill Street. Woolworths has entered a not guilty plea.

Despite these (and other) prosecutions, we continue to receive complaints about inaccurate and misleading supermarket pricing. In our view, the penalties are not sufficient to incentivise compliance. Also, they do nothing to put money back into the pockets of the consumers who were overcharged. The extent of these charges is significant. In 2024 the Commerce Commission estimated pricing errors could be costing New Zealanders tens of millions of dollars a year.

Minister Willis wrote to the supermarkets in June 2025 to remind them of their obligations under the Fair Trading Act and let them know she was considering introducing tougher penalties for breaches.

After this warning, Foodstuffs introduced a new refund policy to allow consumers to receive a full refund when overcharged. Woolworths already had a similar policy in place. However, these policies are voluntary, are not advertised, are not always understood by customers and sometimes not followed by staff. So, it's clear, more needs to be done.

4. New laws required

A new Code would bring about meaningful change for New Zealanders and help ensure they are no longer over-charged at the checkout.

The introduction of a mandatory supermarket pricing accuracy code would help address this systemic problem by establishing:

- Clear, enforceable pricing rules: so that supermarkets are held to account for ensuring accurate pricing.
- Higher penalties for misleading pricing and promotions: to serve as a meaningful deterrent and signal the seriousness of the need for accurate pricing.
- Infringement notice powers: giving regulators the ability to swiftly respond to breaches without the need for lengthy legal action.
- Automatic compensation for consumers when pricing is incorrect: ensuring that shoppers are not left out of pocket and that the onus for pricing accuracy remains squarely on supermarkets.

Consumers clearly want a fairer and more transparent shopping experience, where accurate pricing is not an optional courtesy but a legal requirement.

As the cost of living continues to put pressure on households across New Zealand, it is unacceptable for supermarkets, that hold significant market power, to benefit from pricing errors that disadvantage consumers.

We urge the Committee to act on this petition and recommend the Government introduce a robust and enforceable supermarket pricing accuracy code. This would be a positive step toward restoring consumer confidence, ensuring fairness at the checkout, and holding powerful retailers to account.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission.

ENDS