

## To the Australian and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation

Dear Ministers,

We, the undersigned, write this letter as you have the power to bring about food labelling reform that we strongly believe will be in best interests of Australians from a health and consumer rights perspective.

In 2009 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Australia and New Zealand Regulation Ministerial Forum, of which you are a member, agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of food labelling law and policy.

The resulting food labelling review, *Labelling Logic*, led by Dr Neal Blewett AC, provided a suite of recommendations. Recommendation 12 of this review states:

*That where sugars, fats or vegetable oils are added as separate ingredients in a food, the terms 'added sugars' and 'added fats' and/or 'added vegetable oils' be used in the ingredient list as the generic term, followed by a bracketed list (e.g. added sugars (fructose, glucose syrup, honey), added fats (palm oil, milk fat) or added vegetable oils (sunflower oil, palm oil).*

We call on you, as members of the Ministerial Forum, to support this labelling recommendation.

Australian consumers have the right to know the type of added sugars, fats and vegetable oils in their food. In fact, recent polling of Australians and New Zealanders this year indicated that 84% of Australians and 92% of New Zealanders support such a labelling change (UMR Research 2016).

Added sugars, added fats and added vegetable oils all pose significant public health risks to Australians as excessive consumption can contribute to obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers.

Guideline 3 of the National Health and Medical Research Council's Dietary Guidelines for Australians recommends that we limit our intakes of foods containing certain fats and added sugars. It is difficult for Australians to put this recommendation into practice if they do not know what type of sugars, fats or oils are in the food products they buy. As such it is important to provide clear labelling to consumers to assist them with identification and product choice.

For Australians to properly take responsibility for their health and nutrition, they must have accurate and adequate information on their product labels. This reform will provide better nutrition information to consumers and is within the scope of Food Standards Australia New Zealand and your role as Ministerial Forum members.

Australian consumers are also concerned with the environmental impact of ingredients such as palm oil. The unsustainable production of palm oil is linked to deforestation and the decline of species such as the orang-utan. Right now, Australians are not readily able to identify if palm oil is in the products they buy. By labelling the source of vegetable oils, consumers will be able to advocate for more sustainable forms of palm oil to be used in Australian food products. Ensuring more sustainable forms of palm oil will also aid the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems in producer nations.

As a matter of urgency we call on you to support the implementation of Recommendation 12 of the Labelling Logic report, in its entirety and thereby provide Australians with better information on the food labels so they are able to make informed decisions regarding their health and impact on the planet. This recommendation is in line with food labelling in Europe and the United States and is the right thing to do for Australia.

Yours sincerely,

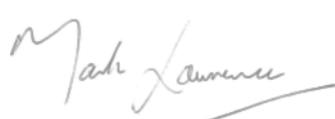
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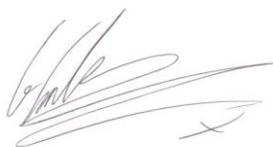
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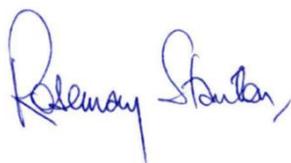
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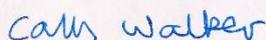


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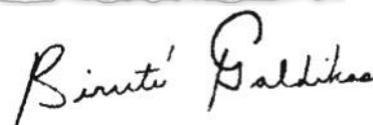


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...when it harms animals, people & our planet.

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