

Background on the New Zealand Front of Pack Labelling Advisory Group:

Front of pack labelling has been the subject of considerable work in the joint food standards system since 2006. In 2009, following consideration by a Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC) working group, the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council (ANZFRMC) issued a policy statement on front of pack labelling.

The Blewett Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) asked the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council (ANZFRMC) to commission an independent review of food labelling law and policy using an evidence based approach and without compromising public health and safety. This Report sought to address many food labelling issues that have challenged governments in New Zealand and Australia, and overseas for many years.

In 2010, the Review panel released a consultation paper, and held public meetings in Australian capital cities, and in New Zealand in Wellington and Christchurch.

The Review panel published its final report, *Labelling Logic*, in January 2011. *Labelling Logic* included 61 recommendations on a variety of food labelling and regulation matters. The key recommendation relating to front of pack labelling was:

- 50. That an interpretive front of pack labelling system be developed that is reflective of a comprehensive Nutrition Policy and agreed public health priorities

ANZFRMC Response to the Blewett Review

Following the ANZFRMC's response to the Blewett Review's recommendations on front of pack labelling, FRSC was asked to draw up proposals for giving the response effect. Given the different policy environments in Australia and New Zealand, and as the non-regulatory nature of the Forum's response to the FOPL recommendations sets this work outside the scope of the *Agreement Between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand Concerning a Joint Food Standards System* (the Food Treaty), New Zealand chose to enact the ANZFRMC's response through the development of an approach to front of pack labelling for New Zealand. Consistent with the ANZFRMC's response to the Blewett Review, the Minister for Food Safety established the New Zealand Front of Pack Labelling Advisory Group to provide advice on a possible approach.

In February 2012, the Minister for Food Safety invited individuals identified by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) as being suitable candidates to participate in the Advisory Group. Members of the Advisory Group were appointed based on their experience, expertise and networks in public health nutrition, academia, and the food industry.

The Advisory Group met face to face five times throughout 2012. The Advisory Group developed a set of principles to guide the development of a voluntary interpretive front of pack labelling system in New Zealand, and identified the steps necessary to implement and evaluate such a system.

The Advisory Group continued to be updated on the Australian developments and are fully on board with the New Zealand decision to join the Health Star Rating scheme.

The NZ Advisory Group has also been advised that it will continue to play a critical role in the implementation of the system in New Zealand.

Front of Pack Labelling Advisory Group Membership

Jenny Reid, Ministry for Primary Industries (Chair)

Pierre van Heerden, Sanitarium New Zealand

Dave Monro, National Heart Foundation

Katherine Rich, New Zealand Food and Grocery Council

Associate Professor Cliona Ni Mhurchu, Clinical Trial Research Unit, University of Auckland

Associate Professor Winsome Parnell, Department of Human Nutrition, University of Otago

Sue Pollard, New Zealand Nutrition Foundation.

Maurice Gunnell, Nestle New Zealand Ltd

Julie North, Heinz Watties

Ms Julie Newlands, Unilever Australia

Fran McGrath New Zealand Ministry of Health

Secretariat

Phillippa Hawthorne, MPI Standards

Howard Staveley, MPI Policy