

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY**

Inquiry into Australia's food origin labelling

*Chair: Mr Rowan Ramsey MP
Deputy Chair: Ms Clare O'Neil MP*

Made in Australia? Committee to examine truth and clarity in origin of food labels

The House of Representatives Agriculture and Industry Committee will conduct an inquiry into country of origin food labelling. Committee Chair, Rowan Ramsey MP, welcomed the referral of this inquiry from the Ministers for Agriculture, the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP, and Industry, the Hon Ian MacFarlane MP.

'Despite an ever-increasing consumer desire to buy Australian made food and produce, there is extraordinary confusion amongst the public over the 'Made in Australia' claim. Recent data indicates widespread misinterpretation of the terms 'Made in Australia', 'Product of Australia' and 'Made from Australian and Imported Ingredients.' Mr Ramsey said.

'Further, the Committee understands that loopholes currently allow some importers of food goods to circumvent Australia's country of origin labelling requirements by staging imports in third countries. Such a practice could impact the competitiveness of Australian food in the marketplace. The Committee is concerned by such reports and is seeking to address this issue in its inquiry' he said.

The terms of reference provide for the committee to inquire into and report on the following matters:

- whether the current Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL for food) system provides enough information for Australian consumers to make informed purchasing decisions;
- whether Australia's CoOL laws are being complied with and, what, if any, are the practical limitations to compliance;
- whether improvements could be made, including to simplify the current system and/or reduce the compliance burden;
- whether Australia's CoOL laws are being circumvented by staging imports through third countries; and
- the impact on Australia's international trade obligations of any proposed changes to Australia's CoOL laws.

The Committee will accept submissions addressing one or more of the terms of reference until **2 May 2014**. Further details about how to make a submission can be obtained from the Committee's website at: www.aph.gov.au/agind.

For media comment please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Rowan Ramsey, on (02) 6277 4967 (Parliament House) and (08) 8645 4255.

For further information please contact the secretariat on (02) 6277 4500, email agind.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's webpage at www.aph.gov.au/agind