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Committee Secretary Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional  
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I appreciate the opportunity to submit to this Inquiry. I regularly consume plant based foods which have the word "meat" in their labelling.

My main interest in the Inquiry's terms of reference is:

"The health implications of consuming heavily manufactured protein products which are currently being retailed with red meat descriptors or livestock images, including:

- consideration of unnatural additives used in the manufacturing process; and
- consideration of chemicals used in the production of these manufactured protein products."

I think it only fair that we require accurate labelling on plant based products. Consumers have a right to accurate and informative food labelling, and that may require some government regulation.

But with respect to the health implications in the labelling of plant based products, I would also like to see the health implications in the labelling of meat products receive equal attention.

Advice from Cancer Australia (formerly the Cancer Council of Australia) states that "There is convincing evidence that consumption of processed meat and red meat increases the risk of colorectal cancer, and there is also suggestive evidence of an increased risk of oesophageal, lung, pancreatic and stomach cancers."

Cancer Australia was established by the Australian Government in 2006 to benefit all Australians affected by cancer, and their families and carers. Cancer Australia states that it aims to reduce the impact of cancer, address

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disparities and improve outcomes for people affected by cancer by leading and coordinating national, evidence-based interventions across the continuum of care.

Cancer Australia points to important health implications for consuming red meat and processed meat. Consumers have a right to know the health implications of the foods they consume, especially where there is a risk of cancer.

Cancer Australia's website provides good clear advice about a healthy diet. "Aiming for 5 serves of vegetables and 2 serves of fruit every day, eating foods high in fibre, including unprocessed cereals (grains) and pulses (legumes), and limiting your intake of red meat, processed meat and salt to lower your risk of cancer."

Australians have one of the highest rates of meat consumption in the world and typically consume well above the recommended amount of meat in their diet; well above the Cancer Australia recommendations. "Weekly red meat consumption in 2011-12, Australians aged 19 years and over consumed on average almost 560 grams of red meat per week, exceeding the Australian Dietary Guideline's 455 grams."

Consumers also have a right to know if their meat has been fed or injected with growth hormones. Growth hormones are a common feature in Australian meat production particularly in feedlots.

The RSPCA has noted "The European Union banned the use of HGP (hormonal growth promotants) in meat production in 1988 due to concerns about the possible link between cancer and HGP residues in meat for human consumption."

Meat and Livestock Australia has estimated that 6.5 million doses of growth hormone were implanted in Australian livestock in 2006 –07.

Once again, consumers should know whether their meat has been subject to growth hormones, especially if there are possible health implications.

So in conclusion, I support fair and accurate labelling of food products, both meat and plant based foods alike. But it is not fair to the consumer to only inform them of the health implications of one food category alone. We mustn't discriminate against any one particular food group, i.e. meat vs. plant based. Consumers have the right to accurate food labelling on both

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these categories of food so that they can make informed decisions for themselves and their families.

I commend the Committee for its work in this area of public policy.

David McKenna