



The Hon Shayne Neumann MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

17 JUN 2013

Dear Mr ~~Murphy~~

Thank you for your letter of 27 May 2013 regarding the petition calling for legislation to mandate the disclosure of palm oil used in food products.

The Australian Government is aware of the community interest concerning the use and labelling of palm oil as an ingredient in food products.

In 2011, the final report on the Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy (Labelling Logic) was released by the Independent Panel chaired by Dr Neal Blewett. Labelling Logic contains 61 recommendations, including one (Recommendation 12) that recommends *'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)).'*

On 9 December 2011, the Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation (the Forum), considered its response to the recommendations in Labelling Logic. The Forum proposed actions and implementation over the next five years that endeavour to balance improving the information on food labels to meet consumers' needs, against maintaining marketing flexibility and minimising the regulatory burden on industry and reducing technical barriers to trade.

With regard to Recommendation 12 specifically, the Forum asked Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) to undertake a technical evaluation and provide advice on the proposed changes to the ingredient listing on the label. The advice from FSANZ will assist the Forum to consider the benefits and cumulative impacts of possible changes to labelling requirements prior to considering any amendments to the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*.

The Government supports FSANZ being asked to undertake a technical evaluation and provide advice before a final decision on palm oil labeling requirement is made.

I trust that the above information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Shayne Neumann