

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Budget Estimates 23 February 2011

Question: E11-024

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING

Written Question on Notice

Senator Xenophon asked:

- a) The country of origin is required to be labelled for fresh fish under the Code, but not when it comes to cooked fish. Is FSANZ looking at amending this?
- b) Does it not follow that, just like a fishmonger might try to sell fresh Vietnamese Basa as Barramundi, for example, a restaurant might try to do the same in its fish and chips?
- c) Should diners not be afforded the right to know?

Answer:

- a) No. The *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* requires that unpackaged fish, including cut fish, filleted fish, fish that has been mixed with one or more other foods and fish that has undergone any other processing including cooking, smoking, drying, pickling or coating with another food has a label on, or in connection with the display of the food, that identifies the country of origin or contains a statement indicating that foods are a mix of local and/or imported foods as the case may be. Country of origin labelling requirements do not extend to foods that are prepared for immediate consumption, such as foods prepared and consumed at a restaurant.
- b) The *Australian Competition and Consumer Act 2010* requires that a person must not, in trade or commerce, engage in conduct that is misleading or deceptive or is likely to mislead or deceive.
- c) Diners are able to request country of origin information from restaurant staff. As noted in the answer to part b), persons must not engage in conduct that is misleading or deceptive.