

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-14, 20 November 2013

Question: E13-186

OUTCOME: 1 – Population Health

Topic: Front-of-Package Labelling

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: McKenzie

Question:

Currently it is not known if the scheme will in fact change consumer behaviour towards healthier eating patterns. This makes consumer education all the more imperative.

- a) What is the planned commitment, including funding, for a consumer education campaign that will ensure consumers understand how to use the scheme to make healthier food choices, and for it to be consistent with other healthy eating initiatives, particularly the Australian Dietary Guidelines?
- b) Over what time period are the Government looking to support consumer education and marketing for FOPL?
- c) How will the Government measure the effectiveness of this consumer awareness and education activity?

Answer:

- a) When the Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation agreed to the adoption of the Health Star Rating (HSR) System it was understood this would be supported by a government led social marketing campaign. Subject to the agreement of relevant experts, social marketing activities would be likely to be undertaken through below-the-line communication activities, and co-branding with other government health focused campaigns.

Communication activities are expected to have a strong social media focus, and be guided by formative research to refine the target audiences and identify appropriate media channels for effective message delivery, and be anchored by a comprehensive campaign website.

These activities will be determined by the Front-of-Pack Labelling Oversight and Advisory Committee (Oversight Committee), and will be informed by a committee of social marketing experts with representation from industry, public health, and government. The social marketing campaign is planned to launch when the HSR System has started to appear on lines in several major product categories, or is adopted by a major food manufacturer/retailer.

The proposed spend on social marketing activities over a three year period is approximately \$5.46 million, for which 50 per cent is funded by the Australian Government and the remainder by the jurisdictions under the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council cost share formula.

- b) The social marketing activities will commence in 2014, with specific timing to be determined by the Social Marketing Advisory Group that will be established by the Oversight Committee, in partnership with industry to support the roll out of the HSR System.
- c) Benchmarking and tracking research will be undertaken prior to and throughout the campaign to monitor and assess its effectiveness.