

24 April 2007

Elton Humphery
Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Secretary

Re: Food Standards Australia New Zealand Amendment Bill 2007

Thank you for your letter dated 2 April 2007 calling for submissions to the inquiry into the above named Bill. We note the date for lodging a submission was 13 April 2007, being 10 days from the date of your letter.

The Consumers' Federation of Australia (CFA) is a network of over 90 community based consumer organisations. CFA is managed by a volunteer Executive Committee sourced from member groups and does not employ any full-time staff. Since 1997, the CFA has not received any Federal Government funding.

The inquiry into amendment of the Food Standards Act is of particular relevance to a number of our member groups and to the CFA. In the past, CFA has been in a position to make submissions on a range of issues relevant to consumers, including food standards. However, despite the clear need for a consumer voice to be heard on important issues like food standards, our lack of resources means that CFA does not have the capacity to make a submission to this inquiry.

We would, however, appreciate being advised of the outcome.

We would also like to encourage the Committee to keep the following basic principles at the forefront of their minds when considering the Bill and any submissions received:

Consumers in Australia are entitled to:


- *affordable and equitable access to essential services*
- *protection from unsafe or unfit products and services*
- *products and services that are sustainable in terms of their environmental effects*
- *fairness*
- *information and education to assist them in making choices in an increasingly complex marketplace*
- *accessible and effective remedies for failures and breaches of the law*
- *active monitoring and enforcement of consumer protection laws*
- *input through representative bodies to policy-making that affects their interests*

Low income and disadvantaged consumers deserve special protection.

CFA has notified our members groups of the inquiry and they may individually make a submission.

Please do not hesitate to contact the writer to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,



Catriona Lowe
Chair
Consumers' Federation of Australia