

Attention : Senate Community Affairs Committee:

Re: Inquiry into Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling – Palm Oil) Bill 2009

We support the mandatory labelling of palm oil because, as consumers, we have a right to know what ingredients are in the products that we purchase. "Vegetable oil", as currently used in food labelling, is too general a term to give us the information we need in order to make informed decisions about dietary and ethical matters. Well publicised facts concerning the adverse health effects of trans fats makes it essential that consumers are provided with full and accurate food labelling information. Also, as citizens concerned about conservation issues, we are greatly disturbed about the current link between palm oil production and rampant deforestation in South East Asia, and the consequent reduction of the habitat of the Great Apes, particularly the orangutans of Sumatra and Borneo. The mandatory labelling of palm oil would facilitate consumer awareness and education on this issue which in turn could stimulate a market for certified sustainable palm oil.

The United Nations declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity. Australia is a prominent member of the United Nations, and claims to support the protection of biodiversity. Passing the above mentioned Bill in 2010 would reflect Australia's commitment to the United Nations spirit of International cooperation.

Umberto and Helen Bonanno