

Appendix 5

EXTRACT FROM

JOINT COMMUNIQUE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS MEETING FRIDAY, 1 AUGUST 2003

The Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs (MCCA) held its twelfth annual meeting in Sydney today. MCCA comprises Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers responsible for fair trading, consumer protection laws, trade measurement and credit laws.

Members of the Council are:

Hon Reba Meagher, MP (Chair - New South Wales)
Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, (Commonwealth)
Hon John Hill, MP (South Australia)
Hon Judy Jackson, MP (Tasmania)
Hon John Kobelke, MLA (Western Australia)
Mr John Lenders, MLC (Victoria)
Hon Merri Rose, MP (Queensland)
Mr Jon Stanhope, MLA (Australian Capital Territory)
Hon Judith Tizard, MP (New Zealand)
Hon Dr Peter Toyne, MLA (Northern Territory)

Apologies were received from

- The Hon John Hill, MP, Minister for Consumer Affairs in South Australia. Minister Hill was represented by Mr Mark Bodycoat, Commissioner for Consumer Affairs.
- The Hon Dr Peter Toyne, MLA, NT Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. Dr Toyne was represented by Mr Elliot McAdam MLA.

MCCA's objective

MCCA's objective is to provide the best and most consistent protection for Australian consumers through its consideration of consumer affairs and fair trading issues of national significance and, where possible, development of consistent approaches to those issues.

MCCA's principal strategies

To achieve this objective, MCCA's principal strategies are to facilitate and encourage:

1. Nationally coordinated and consistent policy development and implementation by all jurisdictions, including legislative consistency of major elements of

consumer protection law and emerging policy issues (Policy and Legislative Harmonisation);

2. Consistency of policy and enforcement decisions for the suppliers of goods and services within a national marketplace (Consistent enforcement);
3. Access to education and information for consumers and suppliers (Education);
and
4. Consultation across governments and with consumer and industry groups to enhance the work of the Council (Consultation).

MCCA is supported by a Standing Committee of Officials on Consumer Affairs (SCOCA).

Today, MCCA considered a range of consumer issues in the context of these strategies. Outcomes of the meeting included:

[text omitted]

Ethanol Content in Fuel

Ministers noted that the Commonwealth Government has implemented a national fuel standard that caps the maximum ethanol content in fuel at 10 percent from 1 July 2003, and that Australian consumers need to be provided with the appropriate information to assist them in making an informed choice regarding the use of ethanol blended fuel. A lack of consumer confidence risks compromising a sustainable biofuels industry in Australia. Ministers called on the Commonwealth Government to lead the implementation of a uniform national labelling regime in concert with the States and Territories for ethanol blended fuel as per the 11 April 2003 commitment by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, the Hon David Kemp, by 31 October 2003. Ministers also asked the Commonwealth to consider the New South Wales and Victorian labelling regulations as a possible model and to consult the States and Territories on the proposed national labelling regime for ethanol blended fuel.

[text omitted]