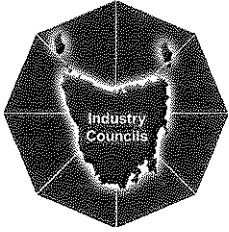


FOOD INDUSTRY COUNCIL OF TASMANIA



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Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Climate Change and the Australian Agricultural Sector

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry into climate change and the Australian agricultural sector.

I am writing on behalf of the Food Industry Council of Tasmania (FICT). The FICT was established in June 1999 and acts as a key advisory body to the Tasmanian State Government. The Council and the State Government work in partnership to pursue the strategic and sustainable growth of the food industry sector and the Tasmanian economy.

FICT has identified rising consumer awareness and concern about climate change as a significant issue for the Tasmanian food and beverage industry through effects on the marketing of its products. Food miles and carbon footprinting are two areas of focus for FICT due to Tasmania's relatively high value of agricultural products and our distance from consumer markets.

Department of Primary Industries and Water figures show that \$813 million of food products are sold interstate and a further \$409 million into international markets. Within this context, the issues of food miles and carbon footprints have become increasingly important to Tasmanian industries. In some cases, these factors are already affecting Tasmanian food and beverage products' access to markets both nationally and internationally.

There is also a growing international movement to introduce labels showing greenhouse gas emissions created in the production, transportation and eventual disposal on all products. These 'carbon' labels will allow consumers to make choices about their consumption based on the carbon footprint of the product. Consumers will be able to compare locally produced against imported foods as well as conventionally farmed foods versus organic products.

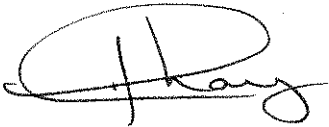
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FICT, in conjunction with the State Government, is commissioning a consultancy into the future impact of climate change on Tasmania's food and beverage industry. The consultancy aims to determine future action in response to the impact to climate change, particularly relating to changes in consumer preferences and market conditions.

Climate change is a serious issue for the Australian agricultural sector, not only from an agricultural production perspective, but also from a marketing perspective because consumers are becoming more discerning in their purchasing habits.

FICT recommends that any investigation into climate change carefully examine the implications of changing consumer and market trends, including issues such as food-miles and carbon footprint reporting, on the Australian agricultural sector.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Chong', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Heather Chong
Chair
Food Industry Council of Tasmania