

AUSTRALIAN CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



MEDIA RELEASE

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‘Up front’ nutrition labelling will aid healthier choices

Food labelling must carry clearer front-of-pack information to help Australia’s increasingly overweight population make healthier food choices, the nation’s largest independent disease prevention groups said today.

Chair of the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance, Professor Ian Olver, said the alliance’s five members and a number of other public health bodies had published a consensus statement outlining the principles of effective front-of-pack food labelling, which called on government to implement a single, clear, consistent and easy to understand system that allows people to interpret nutrition information at a glance.

“Food labelling that makes it easier for people to make healthy choices is an important element of a comprehensive strategy to address increasing levels of obesity and poor nutrition in Australia,” Professor Olver said,

“The key objectives of front-of-pack food labelling must be to guide consumers towards healthier food choices and to encourage the food industry to produce healthier products.

“Consumers need a tool that is clear, simple and meaningful to help them interpret nutrition information at a glance if we are to make it easier for them to make healthier food choices,” Professor Olver said.

“Unfortunately, consumer testing of the daily intake guide favoured by some in the food industry shows that it is less effective than other systems in achieving this objective,” said Professor Olver.

“We definitely need a more effective and consumer friendly system.

“While there are a number of promising front-of-pack labelling systems, further consumer research and testing is required to find the most appropriate final format for a front-of-pack labelling scheme,” Professor Olver said.

“This will require the government, health professionals, public health representatives and the food industry to work together to develop the best front-of-pack labelling system for Australia.” Professor Olver said.

The consensus statement has been submitted to the Food Regulation Standing Committee in response to its consultation paper on front pack food labelling.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Lesley Branagan, 0439 827 781 lesley.branagan@cancer.org.au
Franca Marine, 0432 567 413 franca.marine@cancer.org.au

The consensus statement was developed by: the member organisations of the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance comprising Cancer Council Australia, Diabetes Australia, Kidney Health Australia, National Heart Foundation of Australia and National Stroke Foundation; the Obesity Policy Coalition; the Public Health Association of Australia; the Dietitians Association of Australia; Choice (Australian Consumers’ Association); the Institute of Obesity, Nutrition and Exercise, University of Sydney and Associate Professor Peter Williams, Smart Food Centre, University of Wollongong.