



Food Labelling Requirements

Environmental Health Unit, Surf Coast Shire

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INTRODUCTION

These guidelines provide a general summary of what information is required to be included on Victorian food labels from a food safety and fair trade perspective.

For further information or more specific questions relating to individual circumstances it is recommended that businesses refer directly to the relevant legislation, contact Council or contact other responsible regulatory authorities directly (as specified later in this publication).

FOOD STANDARDS CODE

The Victorian Food Act 1984 requires that most pre-packaged food be labelled to ensure that it is safe and suitable for consumption and is traceable in the event of a food safety recall or incident. The specific labelling laws that apply are contained within the Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code “the Code”.

The table below clarifies which foods require labelling and those that are exempt.

Foods that require labelling	Foods that are exempt*
All other packaged foods	Small food packages that are < 30cm ²
	Foods made on premises where sold
	Whole or cut fruit and vegetables
	Foods delivered packaged and ready for consumption at express order of purchaser
	Foods sold for a fundraising event

*Information about exempt foods must be provided to purchaser or Council upon request and some exempt foods may still need to comply with part of the labelling requirements (dependent on the specific food) for further information refer to the Food Standards Code

The following pages outline those specific sections of the Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code which relate to labelling and summarise what information must be provided to satisfy the requirements of the Code.

FOOD STANDARDS CODE REQUIREMENTS

Category	FSANZ Food Standards Code Standard(s)	Requirements
Identification	1.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed name of food
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot identification (some exemptions)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and address of Australian packer, manufacturer, vendor or importer (must be physical location <u>not</u> PO Box)
Mandatory Warning and Advisory Statements and Declarations	1.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory warning statements need to be displayed for foods that contain bee pollen, milk products made from soy or cereal, food containing aspartame or aspartame-acesulphame salt, quinine, guarana, phytosterols, phytostanols or their esters, caffeine products, propolis, unpasteurised egg, unpasteurised milk, royal jelly
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declarations must be made where food contains added sulphites, cereals containing gluten, crustacea, egg, fish, milk and milk products, peanuts and peanut products, sesame seeds or sesame seed products, soybeans or soybean products, tree nuts or tree nut products
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory statement about laxative effect must be provided for foods that contain polyols or polydextrose
Ingredients	1.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most ingredients are required to be included (there are a few exceptions)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingredients to be listed using common name or name that describes it's true name or generic name as specified in the code for certain foods
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic names required for cereals, fats or oils, fish, milk solids, nuts, starch and sugar (see Food Standards Code for further information)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingredients should generally be declared in descending order of ingoing weight (some exceptions)

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Category	FSANZ Food Standards Code Standard(s)	Requirements
Ingredients	1.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compound ingredients must be declared and must list ingredients in brackets after the compound ingredient (see Food Standards Code for further information)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food additives must be declared and followed by the prescribed name or number listed in the Food Standards Code
Date marking	1.2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most food must include use-by or best before date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bread may have baked on date as substitute where best before date < 7 days
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date marking not required if the date > 2 years (analytical testing may be required)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dates < 3 months must include day and month
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dates > 3 months must include month and year
Directions for use and storage	1.2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required for product to keep until it's use by or best before dates (if date marking is applicable)
Nutrition, health and related claims	1.2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutrition or health related claims apply to where food is displayed in addition to packaging and require a supporting certificate of analysis
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only nutrition and health claims can be made that link directly to an ingredient in the product and in correct format that has been prescribed by the Code (see Food Standards Code for further information)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most common types of claims may include things such as gluten free, low fat, low sugar, high fibre and low salt
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any claims not in line with the Code will require supporting evidence (such as a certificate of analysis) to verify such claims

FOOD STANDARDS CODE REQUIREMENTS

Category	FSANZ Food Standards Code Standard(s)	Requirements
Nutrition Information Panel	1.2.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required for most foods (exceptions for herbs, condiments, single ingredient foods, teas and coffees, prepared filled rolls, sandwiches, bagels and similar products).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any foods exempt from labelling and contain nutrition claims must be supported by nutrition information panel or be displayed with the food or provided to the purchaser upon request
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For panel format and information to be included refer to figure 1.1
Legibility	1.2.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wording must be prominently distinct from background and in English
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warning statements should be > 3mm in size
Characterising ingredients and components	1.2.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage labelling required for key or characterising ingredients or components in food (some foods do not contain a key or characterising ingredient or component)
Country of origin	1.2.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most food must include a statement that identifies Country where made, produced, grown
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Otherwise a statement should be provided that identifies the Country manufacturer or packaged and that the food is constituted from ingredients imported from that country or from local and imported ingredients
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unpackaged fruit, vegetables, meat or fish must also display this information next to food or at point of sale
Other requirements for specific food types	1.5.2, 1.5.3, 2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.6.4, 2.9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional labelling requirements apply to genetically modified foods, foods processed by ionising radiation, meats, fish, kava, caffeine beverages and supplementary sports drinks

FOOD STANDARDS CODE REQUIREMENTS

Figure 1.1 – Nutrition information panel

Nutrition Information		
Servings per package:		
Serving size: g or ml		
	Quantity per serving	Quantity per 100g or 100 ml
Energy	KJ (Cal)	KJ (Cal)
Protein	g	g
Fat, total	g	g
- Saturated	g	g
- Trans	g	g
- Polyunsaturated	g	g
- Monounsaturated	g	g
Cholesterol	mg	mg
Carbohydrates, total	g	g
-sugars	g	g
Dietary fibre, total	g	g
Sodium	mg	mg
Any other nutrient or biologically active Substance to be declared	Units as appropriate	Units as appropriate

Nutritional information can be determined by using:

- The online Nutrition Panel Calculator at www.foodstandards.gov.au;
- Food composition tables/databases (such as www.calorieking.com.au); or
- A food laboratory to test the food.

FAIR TRADING, WEIGHT AND MEASUREMENTS

In addition to those requirements contained within the Code, the Competition and Consumer Act 2010, Fair Trading Act 1999 requires that food labels do not misinform through false, misleading or deceptive representations. Such legislation is regulated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and Consumer Affairs Victoria.

These fair trading laws require food products to be labelled with accurate weights and measures. Weights and measures declarations are regulated by the Australian National Measurement Institute.

FURTHER INFORMATION

General information

- Surf Coast Shire, Environmental Health Unit - (03) 5261 0600

Food standards

- Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code User Guides -www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/userguide/Pages/default.aspx
- Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code Labelling Poster – See appendix

Trade measurement

- National Measurement Institute - www.measurement.gov.au

Consumer protection

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission - www.accc.gov.au

REFERENCES

Food Act 1984

Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code

Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code User Guides

Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code Labelling poster *'Food Labels, What Do They Mean?'*

APPENDIX

Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code Labelling poster *'Food Labels, What Do They Mean?'*

APPENDIX

Food Labels What do they mean?

1 Nutrition information panel.

Most packaged foods must have a nutrition information panel. The information must be presented in a standard format which shows the amount per serve and per 100g (or 100ml if liquid) of the food. Examples of a nutrition information panel and the nutrients that have to be listed in the nutrition information have been outlined below.

There are a few exceptions to requiring a nutrition information panel such as:

- very small packages which are about the size of a larger chewing gum packet
- foods with no significant nutritional value (such as a single herb or spice), tea, and coffee
- foods sold unpackaged (unless a nutrition claim is made)
- foods made and packaged at the point of sale, for example bread made in a local bakery.

NUTRITION INFORMATION		
Serving size: 100g		
	Quantity per Serving	Quantity per 100g
Energy	608kJ	406kJ
Protein	4.2g	2.8g
Fat, total	7.4g	4.9g
– Saturated	4.5g	3.0g
Carbohydrate, total	16.8g	12.4g
– Sugars	16.8g	12.4g
Sodium	90mg	60mg

*Percentage of recommended dietary intake

Ingredients: Whole milk, concentrated skim milk, sugar, banana (8%), strawberry (6%), grape (4%), peach (2%), pineapple (2%), gelatine, citric, stevia (14%).

All quantities above are averages

2 Percentage labelling.

Packaged foods have to carry labels which show the percentage of the key or characterising ingredients or components in the food product. This will enable you to compare similar products. The characterising ingredient for the fruit salad yoghurt is fruit and you can see from the ingredient list that it is banana 8%, strawberry 6%, grape 4%, peach 2%, and pineapple 2%. An example of a percentage of a characterising component would be the amount of cocoa solids in chocolate. Some foods, such as 'white bread' or 'cheese', have no characterising ingredients.

3 Name or description of the food.

Foods must be labelled with an accurate name or description, for example fruit yoghurt must contain fruit. If it were to contain fruit flavouring rather than real fruit, the label would need to say 'fruit flavoured yoghurt'.

4 Food recall information.

Considering the number of foods available, recalls of unsafe or unsuitable foods are uncommon. Food labels must have the name and business address in Australia or New Zealand of the manufacturer or importer, as well as the lot identification of the food (or date coding). This makes food recalls, on the rare occasion that they are necessary, more efficient and effective. In Australia each year there are about 70 food recalls, most of which are precautionary and due to the food manufacturer identifying a problem from their own testing.

Details of Australian recalls are on the Food Standards Australia New Zealand website at www.foodstandards.gov.au. New Zealand recalls are on the New Zealand Food Safety Authority website www.nzfsa.govt.nz.

5 Information for allergy sufferers.

Some foods, food ingredients or components of an ingredient can cause severe allergic reactions in some people – this is known as anaphylaxis. Foods such as peanuts, tree nuts (e.g. cashews, almonds, walnuts), shellfish, farmed fish, milk, eggs, sesame and soybeans and their products, when present in food, may cause severe allergic reactions and must be declared on the label however small the amount. Gluten is also included in this list but the caution is more for those with Coeliac Disease rather than allergy. Those who are wheat allergic must stay away from all wheat including gluten. In addition, foods containing sulphite preservatives must be labelled as containing sulphites if they have 10 milligrams per kilogram or more of added sulphites. This is the level that may trigger asthma attacks in some asthmatics.

For more information on food allergies see the Anaphylaxis Australia website www.allergyfacts.org.au or Allergy New Zealand www.allergy.org.nz.



3 Name or description of the food

1 Nutrition information panel

7 Ingredient list

2 Percentage labelling

9 Food additives

12 Country of origin

4 Food recall information

6 Date marking

8 Labels must tell the truth

10 Legibility requirements

5 Information for allergy sufferers

6 Date marking.

Foods with a shelf life of less than two years must have a 'best before' date. It may still be safe to eat those foods after the best before date but they may have lost quality and some nutritional value. Those foods that should not be consumed after a certain date for health and safety reasons must have a 'use by' date. An exception is bread which can be labelled with a 'baked on' or 'baked for' date if its shelf life is less than seven days.

7 Ingredient list.

You will usually find the ingredient list on the back of the product. Ingredients must be listed in descending order (by ingoing weight). This means that when the food was manufactured the first ingredient listed contributed the largest amount and the last ingredient listed contributed the least, compared to the other ingredients. So, if fat, sugar or salt are listed near the start of the list the product contains a greater proportion of these ingredients.

8 Labels must tell the truth.

Suppliers must label food products with accurate weights and measures information. Weights and measures declarations are regulated by Australian State and Territory and New Zealand Government fair trading agencies. Fair trading laws and food laws in Australia and New Zealand require that labels do not misinform through false, misleading or deceptive representations. For example, a food with a picture of strawberries on the label must contain strawberries.

11 Directions for use and storage

9 Food additives.

Food additives have many different purposes, including making processed food easier to use or ensuring food is preserved safely. They may come from a synthetic or a natural source. For example, emulsifiers prevent salad dressings from separating into layers and preservatives help to keep food safe or fresh longer. All food additives must have a specific use, must have been assessed and approved by FSANZ for safety and must be used in the lowest possible quantity that will achieve their purpose.

Food additives must be identified, usually by a number, and included in the ingredients list. This allows those people that may be sensitive to food additives to avoid them. A thickener has been used in this yoghurt - its additive number is 1442. A full list of numbers and additives can be obtained from the FSANZ website. Some additives are derived from food allergens which must be identified, for example lecithin (soy).

10 Legibility requirements.

Any labelling requirement legally required in the Food Standards Code must be legible, prominent, and distinct from the background and in English. The size of the type in warning statements must be at least 3mm high, except on very small packages.

11 Directions for use and storage.

When specific storage conditions are required in order for a product to keep until its 'best before' or 'use by' date, manufacturers must include this information on the label. For example, 'This yoghurt should be kept refrigerated at or below 4°C'.

12 Country of origin.

Australia and New Zealand have different country of origin labelling requirements. In Australia, packaged, and some unpackaged, foods must state the country where the food was made or produced. This could just be identifying the country where the food was packaged for retail sale and, if any of the ingredients do not originate from that country, a statement that the food is made from imported or local and imported ingredients. Australian legislation also lays down rules about 'Product of Australia', which means it must be made in Australia from Australian ingredients, and 'Made in Australia', which means it is made in Australia with significant imported ingredients. In New Zealand, country of origin requirements only apply to wines.



For more information

There is more information about food labelling on the FSANZ website www.foodstandards.gov.au or in the book *Choosing the Right Stuff: the official shoppers' guide to food additives and labels, kilgoules and fat content* published by Murdoch Books and available at all good bookshops. For expert nutrition and dietary advice contact your family doctor or an accredited practising dietitian.

You can find a dietitian in a number of ways:

In Australia:

Contact Nutrition Australia at www.nutritionaustralia.org

Visit the 'Find a dietitian section' of the Dietitians Association of Australia's website www.daa.asn.au, check the Yellow Pages or call 1800 812 342 to find an Accredited Practising Dietitian near you.

In New Zealand:

Contact the New Zealand Nutrition Foundation on (06) 489 3417, email nznf@nutrition.org.nz or website www.foodworks.co.nz/nutritionfoundation. Visit the 'Find a Dietitian' section of the New Zealand Dietetic Association's website at www.dietitians.org.nz or check the Yellow Pages.

Disclaimer: This poster has been produced as a guide to consumers only. Industry and enforcement agencies should refer to the Food Standards Code.