



**Re:** Labelling of Added Sugars is urgently needed on food products in Australia

The Australian and New Zealand Obesity Society (ANZOS) was established in 1991 and represents over 300 medical practitioners; dietitians; scientists and other health professionals interested in research, clinical practice and public health initiatives directed at the prevention and management of obesity.

It is our understanding that Ministers from across the nation are meeting on November 24 to discuss the Labelling Logic Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy report (Labelling Logic) with specific focus on approaches for providing information on added sugars. We are writing to encourage you to support the recommendation that, where sugars are added as a separate ingredient to a food product, information must be provided on the label of that product to identify the added sugars.

One of the key elements of the diet contributing to weight gain in Australians is added sugar. Studies have shown that the excessive intake of added sugars dilutes the nutrient content of individual diets; increases total energy intake and ultimately leads to weight gain.

The peak health body in Australia, the National Health and Medical Research Council in their Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, as well as the World Health Organization, recommend limiting the intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars.

Australian Governments both past and present strongly promote the need for the individual to exercise better choices in what they choose to eat. However, these same Governments have ignored the reality of Australian food labels in which the individual is not provided the fundamental information with which to make fully informed and considered choices.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011-2012 Australian Health Survey data reports that on average discretionary foods containing added sugars including – but not limited to – cakes, confectionary, cereal bars, biscuits and soft-drinks contributed over 1/3 of total daily energy intake for an average Australian. Analysis of that same data<sup>1</sup> reports that more than half consume a level of added sugars that exceed World Health Organization recommendations. The clinical and economical significance of this should not be ignored by governments at a time when 63.4% of Australian adults and 27.4% of children are overweight or obese and at heightened risk of developing chronic non-communicable diseases.

As long as Australia's food labels continue to conceal the amount of sugar added to products, Australians will remain disadvantaged in their ability to make one of the most significant lifestyle choices available to them – limiting intake of added sugars.

On the 24th of November you will have the opportunity to support a recommendation that will facilitate labelling that empowers the individual to make informed choice that will not only improve their health but reduce future burden on state and national health systems.

We ask that you support better labelling to clearly identify added sugars within the Nutrition Information Panel, as well as combining added sugars within the ingredients list. This will inform and empower all adult Australians in their efforts to reduce added sugar in their diets, in line with recommended dietary advice, and enable them to improve their health and well-being of their children.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.