Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

FOOD MINISTERS AGREE TO A STRATEGIC VISION FOR AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND FOOD REGULATION SYSTEM

Health warnings on packaged alcohol a draft standard on nutrition, health and related claims were among the issues discussed at the 11th meeting of Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council (Ministerial Council) held in Melbourne today, chaired by Senator Jan McLucas, Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing.

The Ministerial Council comprises ministers responsible for food issues in Australia and New Zealand. At the meeting today, the Ministerial Council considered a number of strategic policy and food standards issues including:

**Strategic direction on the Australian and New Zealand Food Regulatory System**

The Ministerial Council endorsed the ‘Overarching Strategic Statement for the Food Regulatory System’ that provides the strategic context for the Australian and New Zealand food regulation system.

The document articulates the scope and objectives of the food regulation system, the approach that will be taken to policy development, standard setting and implementation.

The document will be available shortly from the Food Regulation Secretariat Website www.foodregulation.gov.au

**Newly endorsed Policy Guideline on the Addition of Substances other than Vitamin and Minerals**

The Ministerial Council endorsed a Policy Guideline that provides guidance on the addition of substances other than vitamins and minerals to food. Ministers agreed that the Policy Guideline should apply to new applications or proposals and should not trigger
a review of existing permissions in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code).

The Policy Guideline on Addition of Substances other than Vitamins and Minerals will be able to be accessed on the Food Regulation Secretariat Website at www.foodregulation.gov.au.

**New initiatives in policy development**

Two new Policy Guidelines are under development:
- a Policy Guideline on the intent of Part 2.9 of the Code - Special Purpose Foods. The Policy Guideline is intended to assist Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) to begin the review of the intent of that part of the Code; and
- a Policy Guideline for Infant Formula.

**Mandatory health warnings on packaged alcohol**

To facilitate the Council of Australian Governments’ concerted approach to curb alcohol misuse and binge drinking among young people, the Ministerial Council today requested FSANZ to consider mandatory health warnings on packaged alcohol taking into account the work of the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy and any other relevant ministerial councils, any relevant guidelines in New Zealand, the relevant recommendations from the soon to be released National Health and Medical Research Council alcohol guidelines for low risk drinking; and to consider the broader community and population-wide context of the misuse of alcohol. Ministers agreed to forward a progress report on this work to COAG in December 2008.

**Review of Draft Standard on Nutrition, Health and Related Claims**

The Ministerial Council agreed to consider by the 6th June 2008 the draft standard on Nutrition, Health and Related Claims approved by the FSANZ Board.

**Review of the Operations of the Ministerial Council**

The Ministerial Council finalised the first Review of its operations and endorsed the implementation of the seven recommendations. The recommendations are to be implemented within the next 12 months and will make the operation of the Ministerial Council more strategic and efficient.

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