

# FOOD REGULATION STANDING COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE

## FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ

31 October 2018

The Food Regulation Standing Committee (the FRSC) held a Roundtable meeting on 31 October 2018 in Canberra. The meeting was chaired by the acting FRSC Chair, Dr Lisa Studdert. Invitees included consumer and public health groups, industry and food regulators from around Australia and New Zealand. The Roundtable is one of FRSC's stakeholder engagement initiatives.

These meetings provide large stakeholder organisations with the opportunity to strengthen relationships with FRSC Members and to share information and improve visibility of activities that are being progressed within the food regulation system.

During the meeting attendees considered the current work activities within the food regulation system and shared information on emerging issues in their sectors and jurisdictions.

Attendees agreed that the Roundtable provides a mechanism for strengthening relationships and building trust.

Attendees also discussed a paper on extended labelling developed by the Australian Food and Grocery Council.

Mandatory label information to protect consumers from acute food safety issues are well established. Examples include product description, allergen labelling and manufacturers' contact details. In addition, products carry mandatory information that assists consumers to construct healthy diets such as the nutrition information panel. Other information is also considered critical for informed choice and is also mandatory label information (e.g. net weight). Discussion continues with respect to what should be mandatory and what can remain voluntary in food labelling.

Voluntary information can also assist consumer choice (e.g. free range, fair trade, package recycling etc.). Though voluntary this labelling is also subject to regulation both in the Food Standards Code and under consumer law.

Technologies such as internet enabled devices now provide an opportunity to communicate almost unlimited information to consumers, including at point of sale.

Attendees agreed that these technologies provide opportunities for additional disclosure of accurate information voluntarily. The Roundtable encourages Industry to take advantage of these developments.

It was also agreed that the advent of greater opportunities for information provision to consumers should provide impetus to a broader regulatory policy discussion on the role of the labelling both on and off pack.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is currently scheduled for 3 April 2019 in Brisbane.

Visit the [Food Regulation website](#) for further information on food regulation activities – if you have any questions you can email the [Food Regulation Secretariat](#).