



# PACKAGING AND LABELLING FOR THE AUSTRALIAN MARKET



## INTRODUCTION

This fact-sheet has been prepared by PITIC Sydney to give Pacific Island exporters (or potential exporters) a general overview of Government regulations, consumer trends, industry requirements and the design aspects of packaging and labelling for those seeking to export to Australia.

PITIC urges anyone interested in exporting to first check with the relevant local authority, government department or agency in their country about licensing and other regulations before contacting Australian importers or undertaking any export planning.

All exporters should be aware that product quality, consistency, a reliable supply and the development of a relationship with buyers are important factors that contribute to successful exporting.

Whilst this fact-sheet does not provide technical details, it does include the contact points and addresses of industry bodies and organisations who are able to assist with specific technical information.

## CONSUMER DEMAND

Consumers demand a greater range of convenience. They want foods and products that are quick and easy to prepare, portion-controlled, healthy and nutritious.

Other consumer trends include demands for:

- increased food security, eg. packaging which is tamper-proof;
- information on product ingredients;
- more accurate labelling of products;
- nutritional information on food labels;
- bar coding and use-by dates;
- environmentally friendly labelling of products; and
- packaging which uses less material, is biodegradable, and is compatible with post consumption recycling programs.

## GENERAL STANDARDS FOR ALL IMPORTED PACKED PRODUCTS

Packaging and labelling are critical factors in trade, especially export. The quality of packaging and labelling can determine whether products are accepted by the Australian consumer.

There are strict guidelines set out by Government and institutional bodies on the form and nature of packaging and labelling. This guide introduces some important factors to consider, such as:

- All labels must be written in English, be clear, permanent and easily read.
- Labels must display a quantity statement disclosing the mass, volume, length, area or count of the product. The package must not contain less than the quantity stated and all measurements must be metric.
- The name of the packager or importer and the country of origin must also be clearly displayed.

It is an offence to knowingly apply or carry false trade descriptions on goods. A description which is likely to mislead customers or authorities on matters such as weight, origin, manufacturer, contents, etc. is considered a false trade description and is liable to prosecution.

For product specific information the relevant industry and Government contacts are available on the back page.

## FOOD LABELLING

The label on a package of food for retail sale or catering purposes must include the following information:

- Prescribed name or a name or a description of the food sufficient to indicate the true nature of the food.
- An ingredient list. This means a list of all ingredients and compound ingredients used in the manufacture of the food. (FSANZ provide a fact sheet and user guide regarding ingredient labelling).
- Lot identification, to assist in the rare event of a product recall. A date mark and the supplier's address details can help satisfy the requirements of a lot mark.
- A label on a package must include a statement that identifies the country in which the food was produced. Including the country in the business address of the supplier often fulfils the country of origin labelling requirements.
- The name and business address of the supplier (packer, vendor or importer) in Australia or New Zealand. A post office box address is not sufficient.
- Any mandatory warning and advisory statements (Standard 1.2.3 - Mandatory Warning and Advisory Statements and Declarations of the food standards code, FSANZ).
- A Date Mark. Usually in the form of a 'best-before' or 'use-by' date. Packaged food is generally required to be date-marked. (FSANZ provide a user guide on date marking).

- A nutrition information panel. (Detailed information regarding nutritional information requirements can be found in the FSANZ guide on percentage labelling).

Manufacturers can choose any font style or font size provided that the information given is in English and is legible. Warning statements, however, must be in a type size no less than 3mm. The best information source on any of these requirements is Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

## COSMETICS AND TOILETRIES LABELLING

The main regulations regarding cosmetics and toiletries (as opposed to therapeutic goods) deal with listing ingredients.

Cosmetic and toiletry products are substances or preparations for placement or contact with any external part of the body, and the mouth and teeth, with a view to altering the odours of the body, changing its appearance, cleansing it, maintaining it in good condition, perfuming or protecting it.

Australian standards require that all such goods be labelled with a list of ingredients. This list must be on the product itself, or if the product is of a size or shape that prevents ingredient labelling, the information must be provided using swing tags, pamphlets, etc.

The standard also requires that the names of all the ingredients be their English names or their International Nomenclature Cosmetic Ingredient (INCI) names. For more information, please contact The Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association, Australia (see 'Useful Contacts' section at the back of this guide).

The ingredients must be listed in descending order by either mass or volume. Colour and fragrance additives must also be named.

Supplying goods that do not comply with a mandatory standard is an offence under the Trade Practices Act 1979, and may result in fines of up to AUD 10,000.

More information can be obtained from The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs.

Therapeutic products, however, are subject to import controls and require a permit - for more information please consult the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

## NUTRITION PANELS AND PRODUCT CLAIMS

Food labels may include statements that the food has general or specific nutritional properties. Where a nutrition claim is made the label must also contain a nutrition panel, otherwise nutrition panels are not required. For detailed guidance on this topic, refer to Standard 1.2.8 - Nutrition Information Requirements. See also ANZFA's user guide on nutrition information requirements.

It is illegal to make false claims about the product, such as: claims for therapeutic and prophylactic action; words, statements, claims or designs which could be interpreted as advice of a medical nature; the name of or reference to any disease or physiological condition; or a statement or claim that a food is slimming food or has weight

reducing properties. For specific product information regarding claims, please contact the Therapeutic Goods Administration

The market for "organic products" has rapidly developed into a well established niche category. If a product is claimed to be organic it must be able to be proven as penalties for providing misleading information can be severe. Standards Australia is currently developing an organic standard which is scheduled to be completed by December 2008. For more information regarding the organic standard please contact Standards Australia.

## CLOTHING AND TEXTILES LABELLING

Imported garments are subject to strict labelling requirements. The mandatory standard for the care labelling of clothing and textile products is based on Australia/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1957-1998, Textiles - Care labelling, published by Standards Australia.

AS/NZS 1957-1998 is available from Standards Australia (ph: 1300 65 46 46, or [www.standards.com.au](http://www.standards.com.au)).

Products covered by the mandatory standard include clothing, textiles, furnishings, bedding, mattresses, plastic coated fabrics, suede, leathers and furs. Some products may be exempt from the mandatory labelling standard. (Please refer to the 'Care labelling - Clothing & Textile products' fact sheet available from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission - ACCC).

The mandatory standard requires that all care instructions be:

- permanently attached to the articles;
- written in English;
- legible; and
- appropriate and adequate for the care of the article so that when followed the article is not damaged.

They must also be accessible to the consumer at point of sale (if not accessible at point of sale, instructions must be provided on the outer packaging, on a removable label or as a pamphlet accompanying the article).

Adequate care instructions must include information regarding general care and warnings, washing, drying, ironing and dry-cleaning.

## BARCODES AND NUMBERING SYSTEMS-GS1

Almost every product in retail stores in Australia uses the GS1 numbering system and barcodes to be identified. The use of barcodes allows all trading partners to realise benefits, including

- an accurate and efficient source of sales data;
- fast and efficient service at point of sale; and
- itemised receipts for customers.

The benefits for wholesalers include:

- improved ordering and stocktaking;

- reduced inventory holdings; and
- the ability to order and despatch goods faster.

## NEW PACKAGING TECHNOLOGIES AND OPTIONS

Today's packaging technologies allow for a huge range of packaging options. What they all have in common is that they ensure the product is as fresh as possible when it reaches the consumer.

Innovative packaging trends include:

- The growing consumer preference for glass jars as opposed to cans (there is a growing consumer preference that the product be visible).
- The enormous popularity of convenience meals ie, portion controlled, pre-packed and ready to cook.
- Modified Atmosphere Packaing (MAP). This is process where the packaging is filled with a gas mixture in order to prolong the life of the product. . MAP can be used to prolong the shelf life of seafood, meat, fruit and vegetables.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### FSANZ: Food Standards Australia New Zealand

[www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)

FSANZ is a bi-national statutory authority that develops food standards for composition, labelling and contaminants (including microbiological limits), that apply to all foods produced or imported for sale in Australia and New Zealand.

The FSANZ website provides access to the current food standards as well as information on important topics including food safety, food labeling and packaging and nutritional analysis.

### Packaging Council of Australia

[www.packcoun.com.au](http://www.packcoun.com.au)

The Packaging Council of Australia is a national association representing raw material suppliers, packaging manufacturers, packaging users, retailers and packaging designers/consultants.

### Therapeutic Goods Administration

[www.health.gov.au/tga](http://www.health.gov.au/tga)

The TGA provides a national framework for the regulation of therapeutic goods in Australia; and ensures their quality, safety and efficiency

### GS1

#### Australia

[www.gs1au.org](http://www.gs1au.org)

Tel: +61 3 95589559

F:ax +61 3 95589551

#### New Zealand

[www.gs1nz.org](http://www.gs1nz.org)

Tel: +64 4 494 1050

F:ax +64 4 494 1051

# THE PACIFIC ISLANDS TRADE AND INVESTMENT COMMISSION, SYDNEY

## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

We are one of four overseas agencies of the Suva-based Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). PIFS has other overseas offices located in Japan, New Zealand, and the People's Republic of China.

We work closely with a network of government and private sector agencies in the 14 Pacific Islands who are members of Pacific Islands Forum. Our aim is to improve the capabilities of their private sector; in particular in enterprise, export and tourism development.

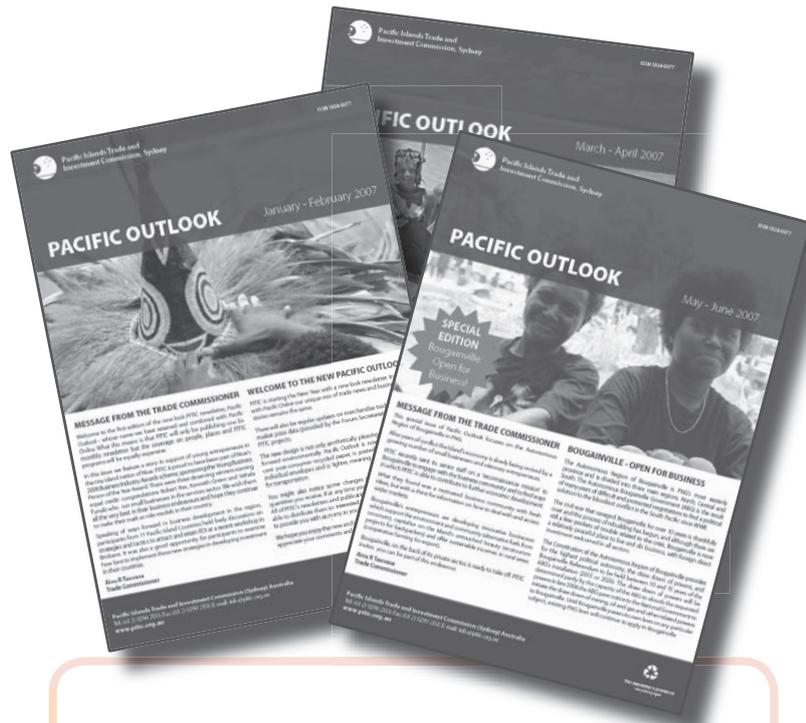
## OUR FUNCTIONS

1. To assist Pacific Island enterprises develop sustainable business and trade activities.
2. To assist Pacific Island governments and private sector service providers develop their tourism potential.
3. To support private sector growth in the Pacific Islands, including promoting intra-regional investment.
4. To support business linkages between government and enterprises in the Pacific Islands and Australia through efficient and effective dissemination of market information.

## OUR EXPORT AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT UNIT CAN:

Provides business and regulatory advice and market information to stakeholders.

- Assists Pacific Island exporters develop and implement their Export Business Plans (EBDs) and Market Entry Plans (MEPs).
- Sources importers of Pacific Island products in Australia or the region.
- Arranges and facilitates business appointments between Pacific Island and Australian businesses.
- Supports skills development, including through capacity building initiatives.



## OUR NEWSLETTERS

Our newsletter provides practical information about trade, tourism and investment trends in the Pacific Islands and Australia.

Pacific Outlook also contains up-to-date information on developments on regulatory changes and requirements for trade and industry in the region.

## OUR WEBSITE - WWW.PITIC.ORG.AU

Our website provides an online portal to a wealth of business related information about the Pacific.

## OUR CONTACT DETAILS

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