

Friday, 13 February 2026

Cancer Council welcomes Food Ministers move for mandated Health Star Rating

Today, Food Ministers have requested Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) prepare a proposal to mandate the Health Star Rating (HSR) system in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

Food Ministers also confirmed that voluntary industry uptake of the scheme has fallen woefully short with only 39% of products carrying HSR, despite targets of 70% of eligible products carrying a HSR by November 2025.

New YouGov research from Cancer Council shows 80% of Australians are in support of a mandatory HSR system. Additionally, nearly three quarters (70%) say they usually read food labels, and about 65% of those surveyed find current labels too confusing to navigate.

Clare Hughes, Chair of Cancer Council's Nutrition, Alcohol and Physical Activity Committee responds to the announcement from state, territory and federal ministers today and what it means for Australian's cancer risk.

"Cancer Council celebrates the ministers decision to request Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) prepare a proposal to finally mandate the Health Star Rating system across the food supply. The ministers' decision reflects what the Australian public wants, with 80% in support of a mandated Health Star Rating system and years of advocating for this by Cancer Council and other public health organisations.

"We encourage FSANZ to swiftly act on the proposal to ensure that we see Health Star Ratings on all foods in supermarkets as soon as possible. This will support Australians to identify healthier options and help reduce their risk of at least 13 cancers associated with excess bodyweight and unhealthy diet."

Additional information and data:

- YouGov research showing 80% of Australians in support of a mandatory system and Australians are actively trying to assess the healthiness of the food they buy
- Nearly three quarters (70%) say they usually read food labels; about 65% of those surveyed find current labels too confusing to navigate.

- HSR food labelling systems help consumers select healthier food products and encourage the food industry to produce healthier foods.
- Having excess bodyweight significantly increases the risk of 13 different types of cancer and causes more than 5,200 cancer cases in Australia each year.
- Australians can achieve a healthy, balanced diet to reduce their cancer risk. Avoiding excess weight gain and eating plenty vegetables, fruit and fibre help to reduce that cancer risk.

-ENDS-

Read the full Food Ministers Communique from today's meeting here:

<https://www.foodregulation.gov.au/food-ministers-meeting-communique-13-february-2026#health-star-rating-system>

Contact details

For all media enquiries and interview opportunities, please contact:

Cancer Council Australia, media@cancer.org.au

02 8256 4109 (redirects to mobile outside of business hours)

About Cancer Council Australia

Cancer Council Australia is Australia's leading cancer charity, working to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians. Cancer Council Australia works with its members, the eight state and territory Cancer Councils to:

- Undertake and fund cancer research
- Prevent and control cancer
- Provide information and support for people affected by cancer
- Shape and influence policy and practice

Find out more at cancer.org.au, or visit our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or [LinkedIn](#).