

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand proposal for the inclusion of energy labelling on alcoholic beverages (P1059)



In 2023, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) consulted on the inclusion of energy labelling on alcoholic beverages. Cancer Council were supportive of FSANZ's consideration of this important topic and welcomed the opportunity to respond to the proposal.

The introduction of energy labelling on alcohol products has the potential to improve community awareness of the harms associated with alcohol. Placing this information on alcoholic drink containers targets the appropriate audience (the person drinking alcohol) at an appropriate time (when purchasing and using the product). Further, the introduction of energy labels on alcohol containers presents an opportunity to increase the public's knowledge and awareness of the impact of alcohol products on energy intake and health.

In 2023 Cancer Council participated in two consultations (open submissions in March; targeted stakeholder consultations in December) providing input into FSANZ's proposals regarding the inclusion of energy labelling on alcoholic beverages. Cancer Council strongly supported FSANZ's proposal to introduce standardised, mandatory energy (kilojoule) labelling on alcohol products. This has the potential to improve community awareness of the harms associated with alcohol and will ensure that customers have access to the information to allow comparison of products at the point-of-sale, helping to facilitate healthier and better-informed choices.

To strengthen the regulation, we proposed a suite of recommendations, including the following:

- Energy content is presented as kilojoules per 100 millilitres on all alcohol labels.
- Serving sizes on alcohol labels must not be determined by alcohol producers, to ensure that there are no inflated serving sizes, and that there is easy comparability between products in the same category.
- All alcohol retailers are required to list energy values on labels, to ensure that all alcohol drinkers have access to energy information at both the point of purchase and the point of consumption. Online alcohol sellers should also provide energy information on purchasing websites.
- Energy labelling be required on all layers of packaging, to allow consumers to use this information every time they drink the product.
- Include nutrition content claims on energy under the scope of Proposal 1049 (carbohydrate and sugar claims on alcoholic beverages).

The December consultation provided the opportunity to contribute to further refinement of the proposed recommendations on the format of the energy information panel. Cancer Council supported most of the recommendations, and, to strengthen the regulation and ensure it does not inadvertently encourage the public to drink more alcohol, we strongly recommend the following:

- FSANZ develop industry guidance on serving sizes, to provide clarity to industry and ensure consumers are not confused by multiple and inconsistent serving sizes on similar products.
- Nutrition content claims about energy should not be permitted on alcohol products, as they influence purchasing decisions and may lead to people drinking more alcohol than they otherwise would.
- Energy labelling on alcohol products should have a two-year implementation deadline, with a stock-in-trade exemption for products made prior to the implementation deadline.
- FSANZ amend the Food Standards Code to explicitly require prominent standard drink information on labels.

Further information on the proposal can be found on the FSANZ website: [Proposal 1059](#).