

Policy Guidance for Menu Labelling in Australia and New Zealand - Submission 2021

Submitted to the Food Regulation Secretariat (June 2021).

The menu labelling systems across Australia and New Zealand lack consistency and regulation. This leaves consumers exposed to confusion, misinformation, and at greater risk of making poor food choices.

Without adequate nutrition information displayed, consumers risk missing out on health benefits. They risk choosing food options without realising or understanding what they're eating.

Differences in regulatory standards include:

- some states mandate kilojoule content labelling, while others don't.
- the existing kilojoule labelling systems also differ between states
- labelling of alcohol products
- allergen labelling
- food chains which operate across different states can choose which standards to abide by

Alcohol products are often high in kilojoules, and low in nutritional value. Yet research by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) shows consumers are often unaware of what they're drinking. There's a need to better educate and inform consumers. This will empower

people to make healthier decisions using the information available.

Many food outlets don't provide information around the kilojoule content of food options. This makes it harder for customers to compare different menu options, ingredients, and serving sizes.

Dietitians Australia recommends government intervention through new policy guidelines. A Food Standards Code should be enforced, creating a consistent approach to menu labelling across Australia and New Zealand. Food outlets should be required to label allergens and kilojoule content in their menu items. These national principles should be enforced. They should not be at the discretion of food outlets, as it should be the priority to ensure the health and education of consumers.

This consistent and comprehensive approach to menu labelling will allow consumer awareness. Increasing exposure and understanding will come as a positive consequence of this. Education and social media campaigns would help consumers to make informed decisions. These could explain how to interpret and understand the new labelling practices.

For more download our [full submission](#).

Get in touch

If you have questions about this submission, contact us at policy@dietitiansaustralia.org.au