LATROBE CITY COUNCIL

Food Labelling

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT
VERSION 3 JUNE 2025

WHY DO I NEED TO LABEL MY PRODUCT?

Summary

In Australia, all food labels must comply with the Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code. Correct labelling is important to ensure information is provided to people who consume your food.

This guidance document is intended to provide food businesses with a basic overview of the labelling requirements that apply to all packaged foods for retail sale.

For further information, please refer to the Food Standards Code Australia New Zealand website: https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/business/labelling where you can find additional information and resources.

Labelling Requirements – All Packaged Foods

All food labels produced and placed on a packaged food product must contain the following information.

Failure to ensure correct labelling on packaged foods may lead to council issuing fines or taking legal action.

- **NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF THE FOODS**
    - Packaged foods must bear the label with the name or description of the food. The label must not mislead consumers.
- **BATCH IDENTIFICATION**
    - Batch identification numbers will assist in the event of a food recall, date marking can address this requirement.
- **INGREDIENTS LIST**
    - A list of ingredients must be included. Ingredients must be listed from greatest to smallest in relation to weight. Any substance including food additives must be listed in the statement of ingredients.
    - The only exemptions to the rule are when the ingredient is the same name as the food (ie 100% orange juice) or water.
- **CHARACTERISING INGREDIENTS (PERCENTAGE LABELLING)**
    - Within the ingredients list you will see a percentage in brackets. This is called characterising (naming) ingredient labelling and shows the proportion of the ingredient/compound included in your product. (eg what percentage of food is in the product, ie percentage of bananas in banana bread).
    - For food additives, the additive must be declared by class name and number following – eg Colour (123) or Colour (Indigotin)

- **ALLERGEN, MANDATORY AND ADVISORY STATEMENT/DECLARATIONS**
    - Some foods and ingredients can cause allergic reactions including anaphylaxis, immune reactions and other levels of adverse health reactions. These certain ingredients and components must be declared on food labels. A full list of these can be found in the Code (Standard 1.2.3-)
    - Advisory statements are used where there is a possibility that the product may have been contaminated but you are not making an allergen claim (eg this product may contain….)
    - Allergens in the ingredients list **must** be highlighted in **bold print** and the type specified.
    - It is recommended that there is an additional statement on a separate line in bold (eg **Contains eggs, almonds wheat flour (gluten) (must specify the type of flour).**

- **DATE MARKING**
    - A date mark must be included and can be either “best before”, “use by” or ‘baked on”.
    - BEST BEFORE – is the date up to which the quality of the food is guaranteed and is stored in accordance with the manufacturer’s storage recommendations.
    - USE BY – is the date which after that the food for sale should not be consumed because of health and safety reasons.
    - BAKED ON – bread or baked goods with a shelf life of 7 days or less, can be labelled with a baked-on date.

- **DIRECTIONS FOR USE AND STORAGE**
    - Required for all products that require a date mark. Instructions on how the food must be stored to protect the health and safety of the product.
    - Further any specific storage conditions to ensure a food product remains safe to consume must be stated (eg keep refrigerated)

- **COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**
    - A label must include a statement that identifies the country where the food was made, produced or grown.
    - Alternatively, the packaging needs to identify the country where the food was made or manufactured and that contains imported ingredients. (eg Made in Australia from local and imported ingredients) (refer to the following link in relation to the label required for your product) https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/labelling/coo

- **NUTRITION INFORMATION PANEL**
  - The NIP on food labels provides important information on the following:
    - Protein
    - Fat
    - Saturated fat
    - Carbohydrates
    - Sugars
    - Sodium
    - Energy/kilojoules
    - Quantity per 100g
    - Serving size
    - Dietary fibre.

Nutritional Panel Calculator Tool

For assistance in developing a nutritional panel for your product, you can use the tool located at the FSANZ website to calculate this information.

https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/business/labelling/nutrition-panel-calculator

A Food Label Fact Sheet and further information can be found at:

https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-11/food%20label%20poster%20%281%29.pdf

To find out if your product requires a food label, please follow the quiz at:

https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/food-labelling/do-i-need-food-label

To utilise the Food Labelling Assistant tool please follow:

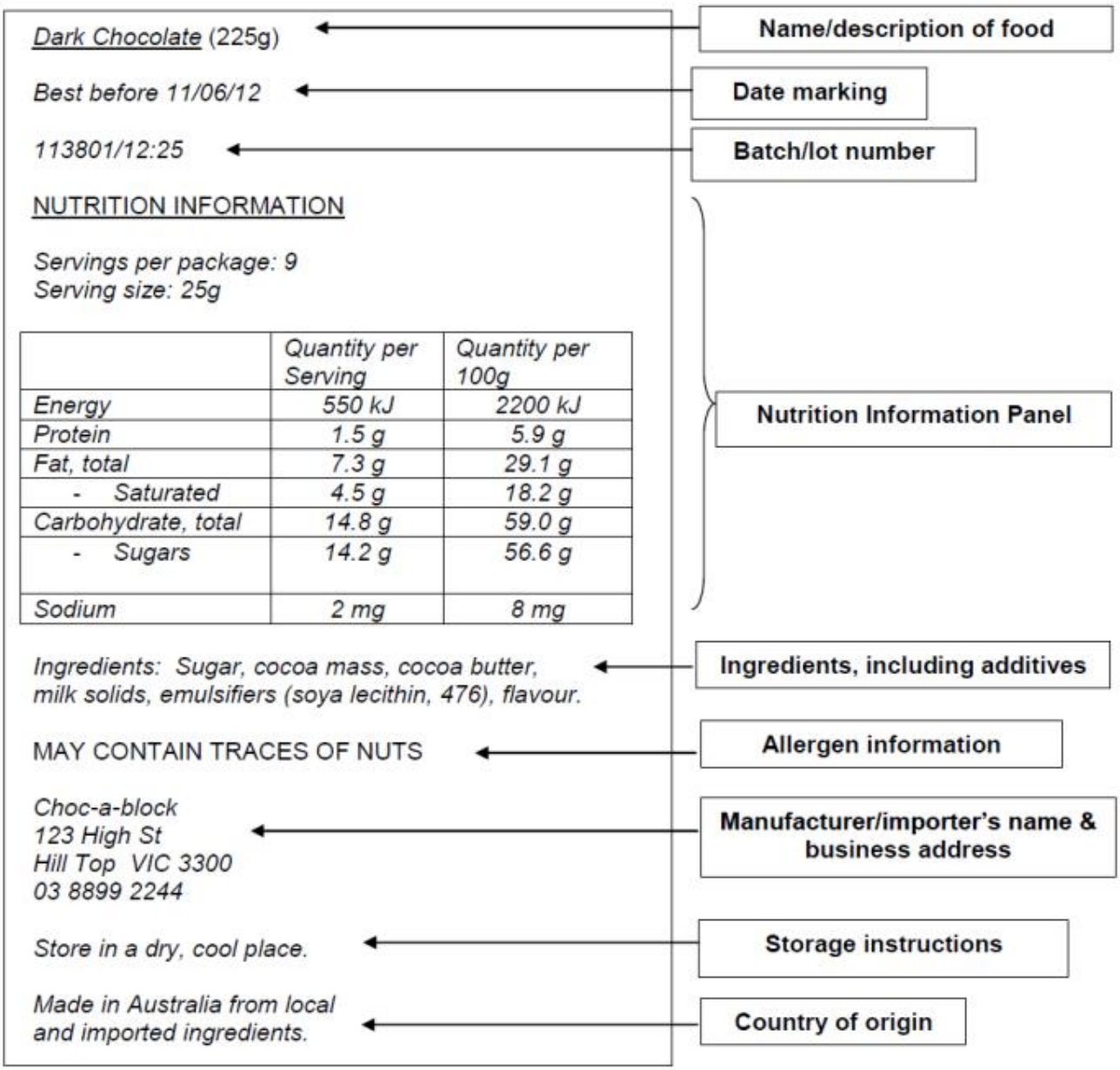
https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/food-labelling-assistant

Exemptions from Foods Requiring A Food Label

There are certain foods that do not require labelling, these include:

- Made and packaged from the premises it is sold at
- Is packaged in the presence of the purchaser
- Food that is not in an individual package
- Food displayed in a display cabinet
- Is delivered packaged and ready for immediate consumption at the express order of the purchaser, eg: pizza and take away meals

EXAMPLE OF A FOOD LABEL



Where can I get further information?

Environmental Health Unit at Latrobe City Council
on ☎ 1300 367 700
or via email at healthservices@latrobe.vic.gov.au

References & Further Information

- FSANZ
- Food Act 1984
- Food Safety Victoria
- NSW food authority – labelling
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)
- Dairy Technical Services Food Laboratory (DTS)
- Food Labels what do they mean poster
- ACCC - Country of Origin information

Related Websites

Name of Authority	Hyperlink
Australian Competition and Consumers Commission (ACCC)	https://www.accc.gov.au/publications/country-of-origin-food-labelling
Country of Origin Labelling	https://industry.gov.au/industry/IndustrySectors/FoodManufacturingIndustry/Pages/Country-of-Origin-Labelling.aspx
Country of Origin Labelling Tool	http://www.originlabeltool.business.gov.au/
Food Safety Victoria	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety
Food Standards Australia and New Zealand	http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Pages/default.aspx
National Measurement Institute	http://www.measurement.gov.au/Publications/trademeasurement/Documents/Guide-to-the-Sale-of-Pre-packaged-Goods.pdf
New South Wales Food Authority	http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/foodsafetyandyou/food-labelling
Nutritional Panel Calculator	https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/business/labelling/nutritionpanel-calculator
Therapeutic Good Administration Labelling and Packaging	https://www.tga.gov.au/labelling-packaging

FOOD STANDARDS Australia New Zealand
Te Mana Kounga Kai – Ahitereiria me Aotearoa

FOOD LABELS

WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

1 Nutrition information panel

This panel shows the average amount of energy, protein, fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate, sugars and sodium in a serve and in 100 g (or 100 ml) of the food. The amount of any other nutrient or substance about which a nutrition content or health claim is made must also be shown (e.g. the amount of calcium must be shown if a claim about calcium is made).

2 Percentage labelling

Food labels must show the percentage of the key or characterising ingredients or components in the food. This allows similar foods to be compared. The characterising ingredient for this strawberry yoghurt is strawberry and the ingredient list states that it contains 7% strawberries.

3 Food identification

To help identify a food, food labels must show:

- the name of the food
- the name and business address in Australia or New Zealand of the supplier of the food
- the lot identification of the food.

The name or description of the food must reflect its true nature (e.g. strawberry yoghurt must contain strawberries). If the yoghurt contained strawberry flavouring rather than real fruit, then the name would need to indicate that it is strawberry-flavoured yoghurt.

4 Information for people with food allergies or intolerances

Some food ingredients and substances can cause severe allergic reactions and must be declared when present in a food. These ingredients are peanuts, tree nuts (e.g. cashews, almonds, and walnuts), crustacea, fish, milk, eggs, sesame, soybeans, wheat and lupin.

Sulphites (if added at 10 mg or more per kg of food) and cereals containing gluten (e.g. wheat, oats, barley, rye and spelt) also need to be declared.

5 Date marking

Foods that should be eaten before a certain date for health or safety reasons must be labelled with a use–by date.

Otherwise a best–before date is required if the food has a shelf life of less than two years. Although it may be safe to eat a food after its best–before date, it may have lost quality and some nutritional value.

6 Ingredient list

Ingredients must be listed in descending order (by ingoing weight). So if an ingredient is listed near the start of the list, then the food contains more of this ingredient than others lower down the list.

7 Labels must tell the truth

Under Australian and New Zealand consumer laws, labels must not be false, misleading or deceptive.

Suppliers must also label foods with accurate weights and measures information. The National Measurement Institute in Australia (www.measurement.gov.au) and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs in New Zealand (www.consumerprotection.govt.nz) ensure that correct weight and measurement information is used on food labels.

11 Country of origin

Australia and New Zealand have different country of origin labelling requirements.

In Australia, the country of origin of packaged and some unpackaged foods must be stated on the label. Read more about country of origin labelling on the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission website at www.accc.gov.au

In New Zealand, country of origin labelling is required on wine only. Further information is available on the Ministry for Primary Industries website at www.mpi.govt.nz

12 Nutrition and health claims

Nutrition content claims are claims about the content of certain nutrients or substances in a food, (e.g. 'contains calcium'). Health claims refer to a relationship between a food and health. There are rules for when nutrition content or health claims are made on food labels.

10

Legibility requirements

Any labelling requirements must be in English, be legible and prominent so as to contrast distinctly with the background on the label.

9

Directions for use and storage

Where specific storage conditions are required for a food to keep until its best-before or use-by date, those conditions must be included on the label. If the food must be used in accordance with certain directions for health or safety reasons, those directions must be included on the label.

8

Food additives

Food additives must be identified in the ingredient list, usually by their class name (e.g. 'thickener' or 'colour') followed by the food additive name or number. A thickener has been used in this yoghurt and it is labelled as 'thickener (1442)'. A full list of food additive names and numbers is available from www.foodstandards.gov.au

For more information on food labelling

visit www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodlabelling

Or follow us on www.facebook.com/Food.Standards www.twitter.com/FSANZnews and @foodstandardsanz