

New Food Allergen Labelling Laws approved by FSANZ today

Food and Beverage manufacturers, retailers and importers must adhere to the new laws

New legislation regarding allergen labelling of food and beverage products sold in Australia has been approved by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) today, 25th February 2021.

The Plain English Allergen Labelling (PEAL) regulations have been introduced to ensure allergen labelling is more transparent and consistent on Australian food packaging, making it easier for allergen affected consumers to understand the label.

According to the World Allergy Organisation (WAO), food allergy is a disease that has been increasing over time across the world, and countries such as Australia and the UK are experiencing some of the highest incidence rates. In Australia, food allergy is currently estimated to affect 1-2% of adults and 4-8% of children under 5 years of age. That is a significant amount of Australians and their families affected by food allergens, which, in the most dire of circumstances, has on multiple occasions lead to death by unintentional exposure to an allergen, but more often leads to significant health affects. These have been estimated to cost the Australian economy around \$7 billion each year.

“Undeclared allergens has been the leading cause of a product recall in Australia for the past 10 years” Kevin Goddaer, Managing Director of Mérieux NutriSciences Australia said earlier today. “Product recalls are a very costly exercise, not only directly, but indirectly in the way of brand damage, not to mention the impact on the allergy affected consumer. Here at Mérieux NutriSciences Australia, we have been working with clients for decades to ensure their product labels are compliant with the Food Standards Code and other relevant legislation. We take the guess work out of interpreting the Code, and advise manufacturers and retailers how to construct their food labels in a lawful and accurate way” Kevin said.

“The new allergen labelling laws will affect a significant number of products for sale in Australia, as did the Country of Origin law change back in 2016. Whilst there will be a three year transition period to comply with the new legislation, we saw many companies leave their Country of Origin packaging changes to the last minute, which caused bottlenecks with printers, packaging designers and other related service providers, and ultimately caused stock write-off costs to the business. We urge manufacturers and retailers to learn from that experience and start working with relevant companies to make the transition process as seamless and cost effective as possible.” “Our company mission has always been to protect consumers’ health by preventing health risks related to food and more generally to the use of everyday consumer products. With our allergen laboratory testing capabilities, auditing services and label compliance team, we can provide manufacturers and retailers a full service approach when it comes to their Allergen Management Plan.

We want to do our part to support retailers and manufacturers to meet timelines, and therefore will be prioritising allergen related requests to ensure all affected products are reviewed accordingly, well within the transition period.

I’m sure there will also be many companies based outside of Australia who import their food products into our country, unaware of the details of this law change, and therefore we are also here to support them to understand Australian regulations and what they need to comply with before selling products. ”

Kevin and his staff are committed to supporting the food industry to ensure the health and safety of their consumers.

For more information or a quotation on services we can assist you with, contact our friendly sales team at sales.au@mxns.com, or 1300 000 990.

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About Mérieux NutriSciences: As part of Institut Mérieux, Mérieux NutriSciences is dedicated to protecting consumers' health throughout the world, by delivering a wide range of testing and consulting services to the food & nutrition, agrochemicals, environmental, pharma and cosmetics industries. www.merieuxnutrisciences.com/au

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