

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-14, 20 November 2013**

**Question:** E13-171

**OUTCOME:** 1 – Population Health

**Topic:** Front-of-Package Labelling

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** McKenzie

**Question:**

- a) Outside of the committees involved in developing the star system, what communication has the Department had with industry or representative bodies informing them of the new star system?
- b) What advice has been given to industry in relation to the star system labelling requirements and timeframes for introduction?

**Answer:**

- a) Information about the development of the Health Star Rating (HSR) system has been maintained on the project website <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/foodsecretariat-front-of-pack-labelling-1>.

The Department of Health convened two stakeholder information update sessions on 18 September 2012 and 7 May 2013 to provide an update on the development of the HSR system.

The Chair of the Front of Pack Labelling (FoPL) Steering and Project Committees, Ms Jane Halton, attended an industry meeting hosted by the Australian Industry Group on 23 April 2013 and met with the Board of the Australian Food and Grocery Council on 7 August 2013.

The Department has also met with individual companies to discuss the development and implementation of the HSR system and the labelling algorithm, known as the HSR Calculator, has been circulated to industry and public health stakeholders for two rounds of testing and feedback.

- b) Industry has been advised of the Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation's decision regarding a two year implementation period for the HSR system, which commenced on 14 June 2013. This information has been communicated through the FoPL committees, which include representatives of industry, public health and consumer organisations, and government.

One of the roles of the committee representatives has been to keep their respective stakeholders informed of developments regarding the HSR system.

The proposed requirements were outlined in the draft HSR style guide and the draft Guide for industry to the HSR Calculator, which were circulated to industry stakeholders for review. Information about the implementation timeframe has also been provided on the project website (see URL above) and in the course of discussions with companies about implementing the system.