

To Whom it may concern,

My Name is Michael McManus, and I write this to advise of the reasons why I feel the mandatory labeling of palm oil should be a standard for products here in Australia. I have had the privilege to travel to parts of the world where Orangutans, Asian Elephants and other amazing animal species have their natural environments. Sadly on these trips I have witnessed first hand the devastating affects that the Oil Palm Industry has had on the rainforests of south east Asia.

As a consumer society Australia has played its part in this whole sale destruction for a simple commodity that can in many cases be avoided. From my travel to such areas I have learnt that the problem of Palm Oil is not black and white, and a world wide boycott is not the answer many poor people supplement their meager incomes either working in large scale plantations or indeed producing their own small plots to sell to the larger plantations. Whilst we as Australians have contributed to this problem I also know we can play a huge roll in bringing it under control. In my travels I have been to many developing and 3rd world countries and I know how lucky we are here in many aspects in Australia. With our advantages comes responsibilities to other peoples of other countries and indeed to other species of our planet that can not fend for them selves. At the current rates Orang Utans will be completely extinct in 100 years even with current conservation plans in tact. One of the secondary problems caused by Oil Palm Plantations is the fragmentation of the forest and this leads to less genetic diversity in animal populations.

We are the silver lining to the dark cloud hanging over the rainforest and its citizens. By implementing mandatory labeling of palm oil Australian consumers will have a clear and easy way to purchase items that are rainforest friendly, just like we are able to buy dolphin or ocean friendly Tuna. Having this choice and spreading the word of the issues surrounding palm oil is the greatest chance these animals have for survival. If we can at this stage limit the use of palm oil in and around our homes we can create a change in the way the palm oil industry practices its farming. By pressuring the multinational companies to limit expansion into primary and secondary rainforest. And to build wild life corridors to reconnect the remaining isolated parts of the rainforest is a win win situation. We can all eat Tim Tams again and species throughout these areas will gain access to a wider genetic pool ultimately increasing their odds of survival 1000 fold. And the rich multinational companies involved keep getting richer. So we all win.

These are the important reasons why Palm Oil labeling should be legislated law here in Australia and if for none of those than we are a free country so our citizens have the right to be informed and in a place to make their own decisions and not have others chose for us.

Thanks you for your time in reading my submission I hope it is a part of a louder public out cry together if we roar loud enough we can make a difference.

With humility and Thanks

Michael McManus