

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 13 & 15 February 2013

Question: E13-146

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: Warning Labels for Alcohol

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Senator Di Natalie

Question:

- a) Will the evaluation of the alcohol industry's voluntary labelling regime push out the initial December 2013 timeframe for the introduction of health warning labels for alcohol?
- b) Given that the Legislative and Governance Forum has already decided that a mandatory pregnancy label be implemented, is this evaluation just a stalling tactic to delay the introduction of a mandatory pregnancy warning label for alcohol?

Answer:

- a) The Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation's Response to the Recommendations of Labelling Logic: Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy indicates its view that there should be mandatory labelling on alcohol about the risks of drinking whilst pregnant and that industry should be allowed two years to adopt voluntary initiatives before regulating for this change.
- b) The Forum recognises the importance of government, industry and other stakeholders working together to achieve a single agreed labelling approach. The Forum supports the work between stakeholders including industry and the Department of Health and Ageing, to achieve labelling which is effective, meets public health policy objectives and supports Australia's production and manufacturing industries. The need for industry organisations to pursue clear and unambiguous alcohol warning messages consistent with the Australian Alcohol Guidelines is also recognised. The Commonwealth is working closely with industry to ensure that voluntary initiatives do not diverge from public health objectives.