

MORE INFORMATION

Alexandra McManus,
Director CESSH, Curtin University.
E: A.McManus@curtin.edu.au

REGULATION

Label compliance countdown

ALEXANDRA MCMANUS

January 2013 saw the enactment of new legislation for food labelling in Australia, bringing the subject back into the spotlight for all food businesses, including seafood.

Seafood businesses may have thought that food labelling laws don't apply to them – and you may hear yourself saying right now “but we only sell unpackaged whole fish and fillets!”

While fresh whole and filleted fish and seafood do not need formal food labels, retailers must be able to state the nutritional information of all unpackaged produce if requested. Similarly, they must provide kilojoule information for any take away food produced on the premises.

Health claims have enormous marketing potential, however they must be approved by FSANZ prior to them being placed on product labels. Those allowable in Australia are listed on the FSANZ website.

The Australian Seafood CRC has produced the Super Seafood package that can help with this requirement – you can download this kit from www.seafoodcrc.com

A key example for the seafood sector is labelling references to omega 3s. This is an important marketing point of difference, but the FSC requires that the nutritional information panel breaks down each type (DHA & EPA).

Food businesses have until January 2016 to comply with the revised Food

Standards Code (FSC). The FSC governs the legal requirements for the composition, labelling, processing and safety of all foods sold in Australia.

The FSC is available on the Food Standards Australian New Zealand (FSANZ) website (www.foodstandards.gov.au) and outlines some simple rules to follow. For example, food labels must be visible, clear, truthful, not misleading, show the nutritional composition of the food and state any possible allergens.

The Centre of Excellence Science Seafood & Health (CESSH) is available to assist businesses with information during this important transition period to January 18, 2016. 

Retailers must be able to state the nutritional information of all unpackaged produce if requested by the customer (yes this means fresh, whole and filleted fish and seafood)!

