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SUBMISSION ON

A1155 – 2'-FL and LNnT in infant formula and other products

Submission to: Food Standards Australia New Zealand

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Due date: 2nd September 2019

Maternal and Child Health Manager

On behalf of Women's Health Action Trust

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Introduction:

Women's Health Action is a women's health promotion, information and consumer advisory service. We are a non-government organisation that works with health professionals, policy makers and other not for profit organisations to influence and inform health policy and service delivery for women. We are highly regarded as leaders in the provision of quality, evidence-based consumer-focused information and advice to ensure health policy and service delivery meets the needs of diverse women, and has intended and equitable outcomes. We have a special focus on maternal and child health policy and promotion, as well as women's sexual and reproductive human rights (SRHR).

We provide:

- Expertise in the development of high-quality health consumer information resources.
- Consumer representation and women's health perspectives in a range of consultations, working parties and health service reviews.
- Discussion forums, seminars and presentations on women's health, public health and gender issues
- Evidence-based analysis and advice to health providers, NGOs and DHBs, the Ministry of Health, and other public agencies on women's health (including screening), public health, gender and consumer issues including a focus on reducing inequalities particularly for Maori women.
- A range of breastfeeding promotion activities which connects us with young women, their families, and communities.

The following submission presents our perspectives on some of the areas discussed in the consultation paper on infant formula products for special dietary uses

This submission is informed by our extensive background in maternal and child health promotion and policy analysis and through our knowledge and understanding of the spirit and intent of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. **Please note** that in addition to the views of Women's Health Action, aspects of this submission represents the views of wider networks with whom we are involved.

General comments:

Women's Health Action and our stakeholders involved in this consultation believe that any amendment of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) should ensure that the three primary objectives (below) of Section 18 of the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991 (FSANZ Act) lead any revision decisions:

1. The protection of public health and safety;
2. The provision of adequate information relating to food to enable consumers to make informed choices; and
3. The prevention of misleading or deceptive conduct.

Application A1155:

We do not support the application from Glycom A/S to permit the voluntary addition of 2'-Ofucosyllactose (2'-FL) alone or in combination with Lacto-N-neotetraose (LNnT). We strongly believe that where sufficient levels of quality evidence supports the addition of ingredients and/or changes to the composition of infant formula, changes should be universally mandated via Codex Alimentarius Standards.

2.3.5.2 Prohibited representations

We strongly support the proposal to prohibit any reference to 'human milk identical oligosaccharide', 'human milk oligosaccharide', 'HiMO' or 'HMO'.

We would like to see this prohibition extend to any claims (words, phrases or abbreviations) that may lead consumers to believe that any addition of ingredients or changes to the composition of breastmilk substitutes will produce a product that is equal or superior to breastfeeding or breastmilk feeding.

2.3.7 Exclusivity

Allowing exclusive rights to an individual manufacturer to include a substance or ingredient that has been demonstrated to provide health benefits goes against the FSANZ values of protecting and supporting [population] health and against the Codex Alimentarius aim of protecting consumers' health and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.

Health claims and representations:

We support FSANZ's position with respect to making a health claim regarding 'gut health' in Proposal P293, and we agree that gut health is multifactorial.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on this review and are happy to provide further information or clarification of issues discussed in this submission should that be helpful.