

## Proposal P1050 – Submission Template

Please use the template below to provide your submission to Proposal P1050 – Pregnancy warning labels on alcoholic beverages. Please submit this to FSANZ as a word document (if required, a pdf of the submission may also be provided in addition to the word document).

For information about making a submission, including what your submission should include, visit the FSANZ website at [information for submitters](#).

### **Submission to Proposal P1050 – Pregnancy warning labels on alcoholic beverages**

**A. Name and contact details (position, address, telephone number, and email address):**

Marketing Manager – Helen and Joey Estate Yarra Valley – 12-14 Spring Lane, Gruyere 3770

**B. For organisations, the level at which the submission was authorised:**

Owner / Director

**C. Summary (optional but recommended if the submission is lengthy):**

Text here

### **Comments to specified sections of P1050 Call for Submissions (CFS) report:**

**D. Literature review on the effectiveness of warning labels (section 3.1.1 of CFS)**

The literature review fails to address directly the matter at hand, that is the effectiveness of pregnancy warning statements in abating the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy. Of particular note, there is no evidence in the literature to support a pregnancy warning being labelled as a “Warning Statement”. This is emotive labelling carrying the implication of a threat. It would appear designed to create general fear amongst wine consumers.

The proposed warning label and graphic could be perceived to be leveraging the emotive connection with pregnancy to make a broader health claim about the consumption of alcohol that goes beyond the brief.

**E. Consumer testing of warning statements (section 3.1.2)**

As alluded to above, the issue of the pregnancy and alcohol advice as a “Warning Statement” is alarmist. It does not promote a tone of reasoned assessment of alcohol consumption. Food standards and labelling should be about promoting reasoned assessments from consumers. The alarmist styling of the message does not reflect Australian social values. Alcohol consumption is evidently changing for the better across the broader spectrum of society, including around pregnancy. It is this sector, rather than those that are liable to abuse alcohol

consumption, to which this labelling ought to be aimed. Evidently there are mechanisms less alarmist that are effective in achieving the stated outcomes.

**F. Pictogram (section 3.2.2.2)**

The design, as it stands now, will have far ranging practical implications regarding label design and costs. I represent a small to medium sized business that makes a broad range of wines with a variety of labels.

We make a lot of different wines, but not a lot of wine. For domestic consumption, there are in excess of 50 different products. Some are printed in black and white or greyscale so as to achieve price points dictated by supply channels.

The proposed size of warning, largely due to the mandated type size of the “Warning Statement” component will be costly, and may necessitate consideration of new label stock sizes. Forcing a change to colour printing by including a red circle and strike through will potentially alter printing costs considerably. The design, as recommended could have knock on implications for considerable parts of our business planning, as well as compromising prior investment in packaging.

The reports assessment of cost implications in very unrealistic.

We have already taken steps towards implementing the universal pictogram as contained in the voluntary code and given its’ wide recognition would support and be able to accommodate similar much more economically.

**G. Warning statement (section 3.2.2.3)**

The warning statement, “Any amount of alcohol can harm your baby” is excessively alarmist and unsupported by evidence. For pregnant women that have consumed moderate amounts of alcohol prior to knowing they are pregnant, such messages are a likely cause of anxiety. No doubt that anxiety is likely to be negated by responsible health practitioners providing reasoned and evidence based advice, which will in the end negate the messaging being mandated.

FSANZ standards state that consumption of alcoholic beverages under 1.15% ABV is to be regarded as safe. Again, the recommended message contradicts this advice.

The message on the bottle should be commensurate with messaging likely to be provided by health practitioners and should not contradict practical considerations.

**H. Design labelling elements (section 3.2.2.4)**

It is very clear from original directives that FSANZ was directed to recommend a “pregnancy warning” and not a general “health warning”. The recommendation goes beyond the remit of the request from ministers. Given that there are activists seeking to impose various “Health Warnings” on alcoholic beverage labels this recommendation could be perceived to be stage setting for the pursuit of agendas that were not included in discussions, agreements and directives pertaining to this project.

Please also consider statements made in section F as repeated here in brackets.

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**I. Summary of proposed pregnancy warning label design (section 3.2.2.5)**

The label design should incorporate the broadly recognised pictogram as per the voluntary code and message pertaining to the health risks to an unborn child. There is no need to couch the message as a broader health message.

**J. Beverages to carry the pregnancy warning label (section 3.2.3)**

As a general matter of principle, known alcoholic beverage categories that are associated with problem drinking and health risks should be treated as such, and bear a greater impost in terms of labelling and excise consideration. It is a concern that very cheap wine purchased in large formats such as casks, or commercial beers that are typically packaged and purchased as multiples, will end up carrying mandatory labelling that is far less evident and with a much lower impost from a labelling perspective.

**K. Application to different types of sales (section 3.2.4)**

**L. Application to different types of packages (section 3.2.5)**

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**M. Consideration of costs and benefits (section 3.4.1.1 of CFS)**

The causality of benefits being forecast in the reduction of FASD cases is not established in the report. FASD cases are already reducing at a rate that would provide evidence supporting the efficacy of alternative approaches. FSANZ does not establish a case for material benefit from the measures.

The costs to a business such as ours will be considerable.. It will likely effect our cost / price competitiveness in relation to larger operators with alternate business strategies and supply channel opportunities. The knock on is that it may limit areas of competitive advantage we have in agility and market responsiveness we leverage from small batch production and labelling.

**N. Transitional arrangements (section 4.1 of CFS)**

We expect that the mandatory labelling provisions will not apply to museum wine stock, already labelled product and stocks of already printed labels.

**O. Draft variation to the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (Attachment A of CFS)**

NA

**P. Other comments (within the scope of P1050 – see section 1.5 of the CFS)**

NA