

## 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):**

Name:

Position: General Manger Marketing and Export Sales

Organisation: Casella Family Brands

Address: 506-510, 460 Pacific Highway, St Leonards 2065 NSW

Email:

Phone:

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

This submission is authorised by \_\_\_\_\_, Owner and Managing Director, Casella Family Brands.

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

- We believe the wine industry has a responsibility to communicate the risk associated with consuming alcohol whilst pregnant and support the mandatory introduction of pregnancy warning labels.
- All wine produced by Casella Family Brands for the Australian and New Zealand market includes the pregnancy warning pictogram on the back label.
- Whilst in support of this policy, we urge the government to seek to implement policy at the lowest possible cost to Australian businesses and consumers.
- There is a strong case to maintain a warning label that is similar in size, colour and design to the existing labels widely adopted by Australian wine businesses, including Casella Family Brands.
- In addition to the above, we propose the mandatory introduction of a pregnancy warning logo is supported by a consumer awareness campaign, to provide education on the health implications of consuming alcohol whilst pregnant, and therefore reinforcing this message.

### **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)**

- Casella Family Brands understands the literature review on the effectiveness of the

pregnancy warning label is limited to the availability of data pertaining to this issue.

- However, it is disappointing that the literature review fails to refer to any examples from studies directly relating to pregnancy warning labels and instead attempts to draw comparisons to other health warnings.
- Each health warning should be considered in isolation as the implications and emotional response to each differs.

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

- The current DrinkWise pregnancy warning label was not included in the consumer testing process. By failing to do this, FSANZ is not able to provide valid insights into the performance of the current DrinkWise pregnancy warning label in promoting the National Health and Medical Research Council's alcohol guideline that it's safest not to drink while pregnant.
- FSANZ is therefore proposing the introduction of a new warning label without any understanding of the success of the current logo.
- Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation met and agreed that: "a mandatory labelling standard for pregnancy warning labels on packaged alcoholic beverages should be developed and should include a pictogram and relevant warning statement. The approach FSANZ took was to test these two elements of the logo in isolation; the warning statement and pictorial element.
- The phrase "WARNING STATEMENT" appeared on all of the options put forward for public consultation. For the message to be easily interpreted by consumers (as per the objective stated in the FSANZ consultation papers ref page 50 of DRIS) it should relate directly to pregnancy.

**F. Pictogram (section 3.2.2.2)**

- Casella Family Brands supports the use of the pictogram as a way to simply and effectively communicate the message that it's safest to refrain from alcohol when pregnant to consumers.
- The current DrinkWise logo has been widely adopted in Australia.
- Whilst we strongly agree with the recommendation to incorporate the pictogram, we oppose the recommendation to mandate the red circle and strike-through. Mandating the use of red will;
  - Present design challenges for brands with red back labels.
  - Could add significant cost to the production and therefore COGs – this will inevitably be passed on to the end consumer.
  - It should not be assumed that red will be more attention grabbing, e.g. a contrast of black on white could be more prominent.

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

- Casella Family Brands agrees that it is imperative that the pregnancy warning statement presents a clear message to the consumer.
- It is critical that the pregnancy warning message is consistent with Government advice and messages. The current Government advice published by NHMRC is '*for women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, not drinking is the safest option*'.
- FSANZ are communicating confusing and contradictory messages, on the one hand claiming that "any amount of alcohol can harm your baby" on the proposed warning statement, but on the other hand stating that alcohol under 1.15% ABV is ok. This is inconsistent and confusing to pregnant women, and brings the validity of the warning statement into question.

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- We propose that the NHMRC finalise the Australian Drinking Guidelines prior to the warning statement being developed to ensure it is consistent with their recommendations.

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

- In consideration of the labelling design elements proposed by FSANZ, Casella Family Brands presents the following points for consideration;
  - A more targeted and explicit message such as 'Pregnancy Warning'
  - Sizing to be consistent with other pieces of mandatory information so consumers can easily navigate all of the relevant information. This includes; allergen information, vegan friendly and recycling icons.
  - Sizing should also take into account that the information must also be included on smaller format wine bottles such as 500ml and 200ml piccolos.
  - Consideration that a larger mandatory warning statement may lead to a situation in which long-standing messages relating to drinking in moderation will no-longer be placed on the label, due to the limited space for mandatory statements and commercial label requirements.
  - Before a decision is made on the size and colour of the logo we request that FSANZ provide more detailed evidence to demonstrate that introducing these mandatories will provide an increased and measurable benefit to consumers and public health outcomes.

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

As above

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

As per the position of Australian, Grape and Wine Incorporated, Casella Family Brands is aligned to the proposal put forth by FSANZ.

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

As per the position of Australian, Grape and Wine Incorporated, Casella Family Brands is aligned to the proposal put forth by FSANZ.

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

As per the position of Australian, Grape and Wine Incorporated, Casella Family Brands is aligned to the proposal put forth by FSANZ.

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

- The cost implication to wine businesses should be considered and the outcome ensure that the cost to wine producers and consumers is minimised.
- With approximately 100 SKUs in Australia and NZ any changes will incur labour and production costs.  
Our recommendation is for the mandatory pregnancy warning logo to evolve from the current voluntary logo to ensure costs to businesses are reduced.
- We believe the mandatory introduction of the pregnancy warning label should be supported by investment in educational initiatives and public awareness campaigns

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(along with quitting smoking, and avoiding certain foods like raw fish and soft cheeses).

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

Casella Family Brands believes the transitional arrangements are reasonable, and in line with other FSANZ label changes:

- We request that the new labelling requirements do not capture museum stock, or wines released with significant bottle age.
- FSANZ should ensure that if other labelling changes are currently being considered, transitional arrangements must be coordinated to ensure wine businesses only have to change their labels once, to incorporate the multiple required amendments.
- We advocate that the pregnancy warning message is consistent with the Australian Drinking Guidelines. If these are currently under review, we propose that they are completed prior to the pregnancy warning label statement being finalised.

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

No comment on the specifics of the draft variation.

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

- As Australia's largest family owned wine company, we support the inclusion of pregnancy messaging on alcohol labels to increase awareness of this important health advice.
- All comments are provided to ensure the pregnancy warning label design meets the objectives of the Ministerial Forum and is useful and informative to consumers, whilst minimising the costs on Australia's 2,500 wine producers.