



Department of
Agriculture and Fisheries

Our ref: CTS 06055/22
Your ref: A847334

Mr Chris Whiting MP
Chair
State Development and Regional Industries Committee
sdric@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Whiting

Thank you for your letter of 5 April 2022 regarding the Food (Labelling of Seafood) Amendment Bill 2021 (the Private Member's Bill).

Queensland Health and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) have agreed that Queensland Health will, in consultation with DAF, provide the written briefing addressing the Committee's questions. This reflects the fact that Queensland Health is the agency responsible for the *Food Act 2006*, which would be amended by the Private Member's Bill.

DAF acknowledges that seafood (and other food) sold in retail outlets is already subject to country-of-origin labelling requirements under Australian Consumer Law. While these requirements do not apply to food sold "ready to eat"—such as in retail dining establishments—businesses may choose to include this information on their menus, or to provide the information to customers on request.

DAF recognises the importance of supporting local seafood producers and promoting and adequately marketing the fact locally-caught seafood is available in food service outlets.

To this end—among other initiatives—DAF continues to support the seafood industry by partnering in campaigns including: 'Ask for Queensland seafood'; #eatqld; and 'The Great Australian Seafood – Queensland'. DAF also ensures Queensland seafood is harvested sustainably via the implementation of the *Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027*. These measures help Queensland businesses attract a premium for their products as trusted suppliers.

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It is noted food service is a diverse and important part of the seafood supply chain. It is dominated by small businesses, many of which have been impacted by restrictions due to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Mandating seafood origin labelling in food service will increase the regulatory burden on these entities, and compliance costs could be significant. For example, menus would need to change continually to reflect changes in seafood sources arising from seasonal availability constraints and other factors.

In addition to this increased regulatory burden, it is noted the potential for unintended repercussions in terms of how food service retailers source their seafood needs to be considered when assessing the Private Member's Bill.

[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Gee', is positioned above the printed name.

Robert Gee
Director-General
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries