

5 Year Review of the Health Star Rating system

Future consultation opportunities

Background

On 8 June 2017, the Department of Health (the Department) established a public submission process on the Department's online Consultation Hub seeking stakeholder feedback on the merits of the Health Star Rating (HSR) system.

Through the Consultation Hub, the Department, on behalf of the Health Star Rating Advisory Committee (HSRAC), sought stakeholder views on each of the elements of the HSR, along with their views on the overall effectiveness of the HSR. The information provided by stakeholders will be considered in detail as part of the Five Year Review (the Review) of the HSR system.

The independent Review of the HSR system being undertaken by mpconsulting will consider if, and how well, the objectives of the HSR system have been met, and also identify options for improving the system, and for ongoing implementation. mpconsulting has advised that the Review will be conducted in the five stages detailed below, each involving further consultation to elicit the views of stakeholders and to gather evidence to inform the Review.

Stages of the Review

Stage 1 – Initial engagement and review of information (October 2017 to end January 2018)

The first stage of the Review will involve:

- further analysis of the materials submitted by stakeholders
- reviewing relevant data and evaluations, and
- speaking with Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC) members to confirm expectations of the Review, and with other experts/stakeholders to explore issues raised in submissions or to otherwise seek their advice.

This will be a targeted engagement and mpconsulting will directly contact those stakeholders and experts whose further input will inform this early stage of the Review. For example, further advice might be sought from researchers and consumer groups regarding studies they have undertaken in relation to consumer responses to the HSR.

During this stage, mpconsulting will also seek the advice of the HSRAC, Technical Advisory Group (TAG), the National Heart Foundation of Australia and the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) regarding the work that they have undertaken reviewing irregularities in the system, modelling possible changes to the system, and evaluating the impact of the system.

Stage 2 – Wider consultations (February – April 2018)

The second stage of the Review will involve:

- seeking the views of stakeholders in relation to key consultation questions, and

- starting to explore the key issues in detail, along with options for addressing the issues identified with respect to the HSR system.

Throughout February to April 2018, it is proposed that consultations be held across Australia and in New Zealand as follows:

Date	Location
2 February 2018	Adelaide
7 February 2018	Sydney
21 February 2018	Melbourne
2 March 2018	Brisbane
8 March 2018	Auckland
19 March 2018	Perth
12 April 2018	Canberra

In each location, it is proposed that there be a three-hour consumer/public health forum and a separate three-hour industry forum.

This will be the most effective way to gain input to the Review, particularly as there will be a number of questions that will be specific to industry, and others that will be specific to public health/consumer groups (noting that there will also be questions that will be put to both groups). Stakeholders have provided feedback in response to previous HSR forums, supporting this approach.

At least one month prior to the date of each forum, the Department will publish the venue details along with the agenda and key questions prepared by mpconsulting for each of the sessions (to be explored through a facilitated conversation at each of the forums). Participants will also have the opportunity to raise any other issues relevant to the Review.

Stage 3 – Subject specific discussions (April – June 2018)

This stage will focus on seeking solutions to the key issues identified through the Review. Where necessary, short papers will be developed identifying the key issues, the areas of contention and options for resolution. Depending on the issue, these papers may be made available for public comment and/or expert advice sought. For example:

- modelling advice might be sought from the TAG on the impacts of certain changes to the algorithm, and
- advice might be sought from the dairy industry, dietitians, nutritionists and others on possible changes to the treatment of core dairy products.

Stage 4 – Development of, and consultation on, the draft Review Report (early 2019)

Subject to the availability of data (to end June 2018) and the identification of viable options/preferred solutions for key issues identified through the Review, it is proposed that a draft of the Review Report will be made available for public comment in the first quarter of 2019 (for at least 6 weeks).

The draft Review Report will be published on the Department's Consultation Hub.

Stage 5 – Finalisation of the Review Report and consideration by governments (mid to late 2019)

Following consideration of feedback on the Review Report, the Report will be finalised and provided to the Australia New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation (through HSRAC and FRSC) in mid to late 2019.

Further information about the review can be accessed on the HSR website: [Health Star Rating Website](#).

mpconsulting welcomes stakeholders to provide any additional information or comments on the Review at any time via the online enquiries form or by email to the Front-of-Pack Labelling Secretariat.