



MEDIA RELEASE

RICHARD MARLES MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry

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ENSURING CONSUMERS GET WHAT THEY PAY FOR

Trade measurement goes national – after 109 years

Australian consumers will soon have a national Trade Measurement System to ensure they get exactly what they pay for – from the supermarket check-out to the petrol pump.

The new system, starting on 1 July 2010, gives the Commonwealth responsibility for weights and measures for the first time.

The national system will cover measures used in trade which totals more than \$400 billion a year nationally, including exports, imports and over the counter sales such as meat, fire wood, petrol and gas.

Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry Richard Marles said the long overdue national system would underpin crucial consumer confidence and eliminate business red-tape.

“One hundred and nine years after it was written into the Australian Constitution, the responsibility for weights and measures has finally gone national,” Mr Marles said.

“Whether they are buying petrol in Hobart or groceries in Cairns, Australians are entitled to buy with confidence knowing they are getting exactly what they pay for.

“Even small errors in weight or volume can add up significantly over time.

“If you lose one per cent of a weekly \$200 grocery shop because the scales are wrongly calibrated, over a year you would be down more than \$100.”

Mr Marles said a public awareness campaign launched in Canberra today would focus on the importance of a national system for consumers and businesses alike.

“Reform of the trade measurement system is part of the work being undertaken by COAG to create a seamless national economy. This new, national system will replace 17 different pieces of state and territory legislation and will make it simpler for business to operate interstate,” he said.

From 1 July, the National Measurement Institute – a division of the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research – will be responsible for all trade measurement, including its regulation.

NMI Chief Executive Dr Laurie Besley said that Commonwealth-employed trade measurement inspectors will be ensuring the effectiveness of the new system.

“Inspectors will be checking the accuracy of equipment and transactions in all types of retail outlets Australia wide,” Dr Besley said.

Information about the new trade measurement arrangements is available from www.measurement.gov.au or by phoning the new hotline: 1300 NTM NMI (686 64).

Media contacts: Pauline Braniff, Marles’ Office, 0419 664 016
Dr Valérie Villière, NMI, 0404 236 941