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Statement from Flavour Creations on voluntary international standardised definitions for texture-modified food and thickened fluids

Patient safety is our top priority. That is why we have systems, processes, training tools and rigorous science to support all our products.

Flavour Creations introduced a colour-coded labelling system when we first began manufacturing our ready-to-drink thickened fluids back in 2003. The colours were verified by the University of New South Wales School of Optometry and Vision Science.

Australia and New Zealand have been leaders in the early adoption of our scientifically-proven colour coding system. No other country in the world has a colour system for the three viscosities we use here, nor is there anything so entrenched in the market as Australia and New Zealand enjoys.

The development of global standardised terminology and definitions to describe texture modified food and thickened fluids is commendable. The outcome of this process – the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) framework – has presented some challenges for Australian manufacturers, clinicians, carers and consumers.

We have been asked by our business customers about our plans for implementation of the voluntary IDDSI guidelines.

We have examined the proposed guidelines carefully from the standpoint of customer safety and scientific rationale and have raised our concerns that there may be serious ramifications for customers and consumers. For example, the IDDSI framework reverses the current colours from the thinnest viscosity to the thickest. We are also concerned that introduction of the IDDSI guidelines could divert significant time and energy from patient care.

As a leading Australian specialist food manufacturer, we are required to meet Standards Australia and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) regulations and, where possible, we exceed expectations. The voluntary IDDSI guidelines have not been endorsed by these two recognised regulatory authorities.

Flavour Creations will be introducing a new labelling approach that addresses all stakeholder concerns. Whether customers transition to IDDSI or not, we will deliver a simple, easy solution, ensuring patient safety remains the number one priority.

We are confident that this outcome will ensure a seamless transition, allow for improved customer and stakeholder communication, and mitigate the need for extensive staff retraining.

We will announce our new labelling designs to the market by April 2019.