



PRESS RELEASE

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Australian Organic welcomes ACCC water ruling, but what about cosmetics?

Australia's largest organic body, Australian Organic, is pleased to see that seven suppliers of bottled water will remove the word 'organic' from their labels and marketing.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission announced the changes today after negotiations with suppliers saying manufacturers cannot hide misleading claims in branding.

Chair of Australian Organic, Dr Andrew Monk, says the results are long overdue but they are a very positive step by the Commission to protect unsuspecting consumers.

Under organic certification standards water cannot be certified organic because it doesn't have agricultural origins.

Dr Monk says, "We have put a number of cases before the ACCC for investigation over the past years, some with success. This move marks a significant shift within the Commission, showing that it is taking on harder cases outside the domain of certified organic food products, which are well regulated and clearly labeled."

Australian Organic owns the most recognised certification mark, Australian Certified Organic, which appears on the majority of organic goods.

Products bearing its Bud logo are protected by law, and are regularly and randomly audited for compliance.

Dr Monk says, "There have been some areas, including water and cosmetics that have fallen through the cracks with the ACCC in the past.

"This move sends a clear message to unscrupulous manufacturers who think organics is nothing more than a marketing gimmick to watch their backs."

The ACCC's investigation highlights that organic products have come a long way in the Australian marketplace and that there is now a wider safety net for the organic standards.

Consumers should look for the Australian Certified Organic logo, or similar government accredited logo, to make sure that what they are buying is truly organic.

The *Australian Organic Market Report 2012* found 36% of consumers would not buy an organic product that was not certified, while almost 80% said the presence of a certified organic mark lent "some level of influence" to their purchase.

Australian Organic encourages the ACCC to scrutinise the cosmetics and body care industry, which has recognised standards, but where the word 'organic' is still being abused and misused, placing unsuspecting

consumers at risk of buying something that is not what they think it is.

“There are many body care and cosmetic manufacturers going to a lot of effort to meet organic standards and become certified organic.

“It disadvantages them when there are also products that are labeled ‘organic’ or ‘natural’ without having the integrity that a truly certified organic product has.

“If a consumer doesn’t know to look for organic certification logos on labels, it prevents them from making informed choices.” Dr Monk says.

Extra information

Australian Organic Market Report 2012 go to austorganic.com.au

Australian Certified Organic standards go to austorganic.com.au/IndustryResources

For the ACCC media release see: accg.gov.au/media/media-releases

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