

Friday 21 October

New research supports move to regulate junk food advertising in Australia

Statement from Dr Sophie Scamps MP

Recommendations made by a group of 84 Australian health experts in [the Food Policy Index report](#) further support my push to regulate junk food advertising in Australia.

The report, which was released today, recommends the federal government legislate nationally consistent junk food marketing standards to protect children from overexposure to the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages.

The Private Members Bill I am currently developing will aim to do just that by regulating junk food advertising on TV, radio, social media, and other online environments.

Approximately 40 countries around the world, including the UK, Ireland, Chile, Norway, Mexico, Thailand and South Korea, already have or are planning to regulate junk food advertising. I would like to see Australia join this list and hope to introduce my Private Members Bill next year.

The Food Policy Index report makes it clear Australia is falling behind when it comes to addressing obesity. At a time when our health system is under strain and the budget is facing significant pressures, investing in preventative health measures is more important than ever. The National Obesity Strategy found obesity costs our health system \$11.8 billion every year and this figure will grow in the future if nothing is done.

The report also makes it clear why it is so important to act, with obesity the leading cause of chronic health diseases and 63% of Australian adults, and 25% of children, either overweight or obese. It's time to act.

The lack of regulation around junk food advertising means a child aged five to eight is exposed to at least 827 unhealthy food advertisements on TV each year. Another study suggested children see up to 170 junk food ads across TV, social media and online every week.

We already know there is a direct link between junk food advertising to children and childhood obesity. Regulating when junk food adverts appear on our TV screens and in our social media feeds will have a direct impact on the dietary decisions of Australians – including Australian children.

Just last year, a Boris Johnson led government in the UK introduced legislation which will see junk food advertising banned on TV, on social media and online before 9pm from 2024. This is a model I will be exploring as I continue to consult with stakeholders.

ENDS

For interviews with Dr Scamps MP contact Chris Williams:

- 0480 386 879
- media@sophiescamps.com.au / chris.j.williams@aph.gov.au