

VicHealth – Citizen’s Jury on Obesity

18th October 2015

Preamble

The Citizens’ Jury on Obesity recognises the importance of helping people eat better to address problems of overweight and obesity. The following points represent our common ‘Asks’. They reflect our considered deliberations over a wide range of evidence on how to make it easier to eat better.

For the purpose of these ‘Asks’, the Jury considers “healthy food” to be food that meets Australia’s Healthy Eating Guidelines.

We call on all members of the Steering Committee to support and implement the measures below.

Ask	Rationale
Provide ongoing funding for community level programs that encourage healthy eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is evidence that programs delivered at the local level, and involving the whole community, have successful healthy weight and healthy eating outcomes.• State Government will have primary funding responsibility. Other levels of Government (Federal and LGA) and industry should contribute to funding, implementing, and supporting the programs.• Funding will be prioritised to programs supported by strong evidence, such as <i>Healthy Together Victoria</i>, <i>OPAL/EPODE</i>, and community garden programs. Build on existing programs, <i>don't “reinvent the wheel”</i>.• The programs need to be targeted to meet community needs, and implementation should initially focus on communities at high risk or with high levels of overweight/obesity. We want to see adoption of programs by every LGA.• The programs must include monitoring and evaluation components to measure long term effectiveness, allow for improvement and encourage sustainability.

Ask	Rationale
Mandate healthy eating and cooking as part of the school curriculum from pre-school to year 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is better to educate children earlier. Children can influence parents.• Children will benefit from learning where food originates..• Evidence exists to suggest that school programs are effective.• There is popular support for these changes.• It is possible to integrate healthy food messages in other areas of the curriculum.

Ask	Rationale
Develop an ongoing “Life Be In It” or “Slip Slop Slap” style campaign for healthy eating across all types of media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All inclusive campaign sending messages to all segments of society • Snappy and shareable campaign that is recognisable easily • A vehicle for teaching the ‘how’ not just the ‘what’ • For example: Healthy Eating week in January (post Christmas) promoting No Junk Food for January, incorporating a week of Healthy Eating programming to run on all traditional media outlets (TV/Radio/digital/social media) • Campaign will be politically neutral and non-judgmental - community announcement that is to be run by commercial and non-commercial channels

Ask	Rationale
People on low incomes will have a discount on healthy food when they go to the shops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence shows that when healthy foods are cheaper, people will buy them • Lower socioeconomic households are a high risk group • A concessions program targets people with lower incomes and aims to change shopping decisions and food choices • Avoid stigmatising disadvantaged households when promoting the program
A government-funded program to teach practical skills such as budgeting, shopping and cooking to at-risk groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At-risk groups include (but are not limited to): people with disability, CALD and low literacy, people who are overweight or obese and low income households • Evidence shows that skills-based learning leads to behaviour change • There is an overload of nutrition based learning and information - this program creates everyday skills to make it easier for people to eat better. • Equitable access to the program across the state is necessary

Ask	Rationale
Amend State planning regulations to improve access to fresh produce by: - requiring the incorporation of edible, green spaces in new housing and community developments - protecting a proportion of fertile land for agricultural purposes as opposed to housing development, specifically in the ‘green belt’ surrounding the outer suburbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving access to fresh produce makes it easier to eat better. • Communities become better involved in growing their own produce, taking responsibility for their green spaces, and more appreciative of the food they produce. When people become more engaged with their local produce they are more likely to eat healthier. • Community Gardens allow children to learn more about growing their own healthy food and produce. Children learn more about health and nutrition and are more likely to then eat healthy. • The most fertile land in proximity to Melbourne is currently being developed into housing developments that prevent the production of food. If this land is lost, we will decrease access to healthy food. We therefore need to protect a proportion of this land for production of fresh produce.

Ask	Rationale
Make drinking fountains and taps freely available, accessible and visible at public events and places, parks and shopping centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water is often replaced with unnecessary calories and contributes to obesity. Increased accessibility to water will reduce temptation to purchase unhealthy drinks. • This should be rolled out in railway stations, food courts, recreation spaces, beach and commercial environments such as shopping centres
Restrict visibility and accessibility of ‘Red traffic light’ drinks and foods at the point of sale (where you complete the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Alfred Health ‘A Green light for Healthy Consumption’ program has demonstrated that removing unhealthy and high sugar drinks from visibility at the point of purchase in canteens has led to reduced consumption of these products, with minimal impact on profitability.

sale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should be implemented in hospitals, schools and universities, in supermarkets, fast food outlets and cafe drink and food fridges. • Point of sale = at the checkout.
Establish more healthy kitchens in schools, universities hospitals and large workplaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These kitchens will provide healthy meals for a reasonable cost-covering price, in a financially sustainable way. • Currently there is serious limitations on what is available commercially.

Ask	Rationale
Ban “junk food” and beverage marketing to children under the age of 16 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ban junk food and beverage marketing in all current and future media formats, specifically aimed at children under 16 years of age. • For remaining junk food and beverage marketing, equal media exposure for food education (eg. live lighter campaign) that matches junk food marketing. This is to be measured in terms of volume of advertising (eg. thirty seconds for thirty seconds, two page spread for two page spread, etc.) • Prohibit junk food and beverage companies from sponsoring children's organisations, such as junior sporting clubs. Also prohibit sponsorship of sports at all levels. • Implement harsher penalties if breaches occur. • Start an innovative and engaging advertising/marketing campaign targeted at children and young people. • Ban the inclusion of non-food incentives such as toys inside unhealthy foods

Ask	Rationale
Provide only healthy food and drinks in Victorian schools	<p>Food preferences are learned early. Schools can play a vital role in establishing life-long healthy eating and lifestyle preferences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy mandatory for all Victorian schools- including private, independent and religious schools • Support FoodBank’s School Breakfast Program in food-disadvantaged schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantee long-term funding and evaluation- 15+ years • Extend the program to lunch and, secondary and more schools • Funding for healthy food programs in schools to be added and incorporated into permanent and ongoing school funding

Ask	Rationale
<p>Ask that the Victorian government prevent companies from locking farmers into unfair, restrictive contracts</p> <p>Where a company does not require all the produce it has requested from a farmer the produce does not go to waste. Surplus must be made available for sale in the local/national area and other regions or to donate the surplus to charitable organisations, with farmer’s controlling what is grown on their farm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want the right to purchase produce direct from local farmers • We want changes to be made immediately • We would like to see over production be donated into the charitable services rather than disposed of to best serve the local community. • Small scale agriculture options must be introduced in existing and new communities • We believe the farmers need to be protected with a minimum farm gate price • We believe the overall health and wellness of the community will benefit from the natural effects of more edible resources.

Ask	Rationale
<p>(1) Increase level of taxation by imposing an additional tax at point of purchase on sugar-sweetened beverages to raise prices and disincentivise consumption - Tax of at least 20%</p> <p>(2) These additional taxes imposed on food and beverages must be earmarked (hypothecated) to fund new health promotion initiatives</p> <p>(3) Ban use of discounts applied for bundling and multiple purchases designed to increase consumption of junk food and soft drink (i.e. discounting for bulk purchase)</p> <p>(4) Regulate beverage sizes, imposing a maximum size that can be sold through restaurants and retail outlets (soft drinks and other calorie-dense beverages)</p> <p>(5) Introduce legislation requiring all venues at all times serving food to offer at least one healthy meal option.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxation and regulation have been shown to be very effective in reducing use of other substances such as tobacco. • There is evidence from other jurisdictions to suggest that imposition of a tax on items such as sugar-sweetened beverages will influence consumer choice. • It is vital that some additional taxation be introduced to increase prices of unhealthy foods to make them more expensive than healthier options (i.e. soft drinks must be more expensive than water). • We would support a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages (including beverages sweetened with sugar alternatives) and a tax on fast food and confectionary. • The reason for an additional, separate tax (in addition to existing taxes) is because we would ask for it to be hypothecated. Preventive health strategies are incredibly difficult to fund given the emphasis on funding for clinical care. Earmarked funding collected from taxation on unhealthy foods would provide adequate funding for health promotion projects and other activities necessary to promote population health. This would also make the taxation more palatable to the community. • Unhealthy foods and drinks should not be sold at a discount for buying in bulk or at high quantities, as this encourages increased consumption. • Regulations should also be introduced to prevent the use of these kind of marketing strategies, such as discounting for bulk purchase, which encourage purchase of greater volumes of unhealthy food at point of sale. • Retailers are increasingly selling large volume sugar-sweetened beverages, which creates an “anchoring” effect, encouraging people to drink more in one sitting. • We want the Victorian Government to impose a maximum size of beverages that can be sold through retail outlets.

Ask	Rationale
<p>Government mandated health star labelling. No self regulation of labelling in the food and beverage industry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front of package labelling must be mandatory, under a single scheme, such as the health star system or the hybrid traffic light system (traffic lights on the table of nutritional information) • Commit to an ongoing evaluation and refinement of the labelling system in influencing consumer purchase behaviours. • All nutritional information be required to be publicly available in a central and universally accessible database. • Any intake advice account for differences in age and gender.

Ask	Rationale
<p>1. Give local government the final say in deciding whether a fast food outlet is developed within their municipality.</p> <p>2. Exclusion zones of unhealthy fast food chains/franchises outlets around schools, sporting clubs, youth and community centres where children <18 years spend time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent the oversupply of unhealthy fast food outlet options • To allow local government to tailor food outlet planning to their community’s interests • Reduce childhood exposure to fast food • Preventing the dominance of unhealthy food options in local communities.

Ask	Rationale
<p>All projects that are implemented as a result of these asks to be monitored and evaluated to determine long term outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be dedicated funding enshrined in legislation for monitoring and evaluation. • Evaluation should cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Reach *sustainability *cost effectiveness *impact • Be funded for the requisite period to ensure success or otherwise.

Ask	Rationale
<p>Government funding for easy and regular access to health services which enable individuals to better their eating behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand subsidised access to experts including nutritionists, dieticians, psychologists and exercise physiologists (including at the preventive stage). • Available to all people at any stage of life in all areas, especially rural. • Allowing focus on prevention rather than treatment.

Ask	Rationale
<p>All donations to political parties, decision makers and regulatory organisations from food and beverage interest groups must be publically declared.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As our food choices are strongly influenced by regulatory bodies, their decisions must not be disproportionately influenced by interest groups. • To ensure transparency and to avoid conflicts of interest. • Declarations must be published within 60 days of receipt and readily available to the public. • Both monetary and non-monetary donations of greater than \$1,000 must be included. • Political parties to declare this to the AEC (Australian Electoral Commission)

Ask	Rationale
<p>Limit the ability of food and beverage producers to market unhealthy products by advertising a healthy component of an unhealthy product</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently food and beverage producers have too much flexibility to circumvent existing guidelines and regulations by highlighting specific healthy ingredients without the entire product being healthy. • This 'ask' is to be informed by and reflect understanding within the current regulations and guidelines. • Refer to the Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSAANZ) for clarification of healthy and unhealthy foods. • Current regulations and guidelines are too vague and ambiguous without any enforcement. This must change. • Current guidelines still enable food & beverage producers to market unhealthy products by misleading consumers by advertising a healthy component, not a healthy product. • Marketing Guidelines should encourage manufactures to produce health food. • We have bought age in as a factor because children live in the same world as adults. • Fresh produce and unprocessed foods need to be exempt • People need food, so we are simply helping informing decisions.

Minority Reports: Dissenting and Extra views from Individual Jurors

Minority report links to	Minority statement
<p>1: Original Ask: Establish a health database to baseline and monitor progress (ref. Asks 72, 65, 20, 01)</p> <p>A suite of mobile & web applications available within an online network infrastructure that provides education, subsidized services & supports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications pertaining to health, lifestyle supports & psychological services linked & available on demand, subsidized and mobile accessible; in a safe, online space. • Complementary to other consumer campaigns; nationwide. • Larger than local reach with a forum connecting clients to services, applications & each other (MESH NETWORK) • Lifestyle supports & psychological services include but are not limited to: psychologists, counsellors, hypnotherapists, lifestyle coaches, nutritionists, personal trainers etc. • Self referral to services through online portal. • Programs & software can easily be implemented in a portal. • Privacy & confidentiality is addressed through correct implementation of computation processes. • Planning, implementation & evaluation of processes funded & followed through.
<p>2: Minority report for low SES concessions on healthy food/fresh food</p>	<p>It is hard to predict the outcome of this ask. If fresh food is subsidised the money saved may result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall increase in food purchasing and consumption. • Money saved used to buy additional unhealthy food. <p>The potential for harm means this should be carefully considered.</p>
<p>3: Develop an ongoing “Life be in it” or “slip slop slap” style campaign across all types of media. Any such campaign must be linked to an complement the regulatory changes that are to be introduced to support healthy eating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The campaign will be meaningless if not supported and linked to regulatory changes. • For example mandating a “Health Star” labelling regime must be supported by a consumer campaign to educate the public on its meaning.
<p>4: Minority report relating to ask 20: Develop and implement consumer campaign ...</p>	<p>As an initial ask, I recommended the implementation of a breastfeeding support program. This ask was bundled into the ‘campaigns’ group. I believe this ask got ‘lost’ in a very large bundle of asked. There is evidence to support that breastfeeding is <i>protective</i> against overweight and obesity. I recommend Victorians are informed about the benefits of breastfeeding in relation to ongoing health and employee rights in the workplace related to work flexibility for breastfeeding.</p>
<p>5: Mandatory labelling of nutritional information and ingredients of Alcoholic beverages</p>	<p>Alcoholic beverages have been exempted from food/ beverage labelling laws for no apparent reason.</p> <p>Alcoholic beverages marketed towards mainly 18-24 year olds can be very high in sugar (alcopops, etc)</p> <p>This would bring alcoholic beverages into the status quo of labelling.</p>
<p>6: Mandatory kilojoule labelling on all ready-to-consume food and beverages.</p>	<p>If people know what’s in the food, it is easier to make informed choices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kilojoule labelling to be present on menus and menu boards, and recommended on food or beverage packaging, including take-away containers. • Menus to feature kilojoule count alongside price. • Kilojoule content labelling is not to the exclusion of any other required labelling. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raw food is exempt. - Alcohol is included. • Applies to all establishments that serve food and beverages, including restaurants, cafes, food-trucks, and take-away outlets.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government to provide support for small businesses during implementation. - Local Government to monitor adherence during health and safety inspections. <p>REASONS FOR THE MINORITY REPORT</p> <p>This revised Ask was developed from two earlier asks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fast food labelling, and 2. Adopt the NSW calorie labelling system in fast food restaurants in Victoria. <p>Both of these earlier 'Asks' achieved well over 80% support from the Jury both at the third webinar stage and also at the initial voting stage. However when these 'Asks' were combined the 80% support was not achieved (around 75% supported). Many Jurors considered that insufficient time was available to work on this 'Ask' to word it in a way that was acceptable to all Jurors. Many Jurors spoke of disappointment that this 'Ask' for Kilojoule labelling on fast food did get across the line.</p>
7: 095 original ask	<p>It was clearly stated that capitalist economics plays a large part in people's ill health. Growing inequality is going to produce further obesity when free market ideology belief systems guide people's business decisions.</p> <p>I was heartened by steering committee members stating they believed capitalism is not an effective economic system to protect people and our environment. The Victorian constitution needs to change stating that all commerce needs to benefit the majority not the minority.</p>