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Maeve Hutchinson is on the citizens' jury. Picture:
JAKE NOWAKOWSKI

JURY IS OUT ON OBESITY FIGHT

MAEVE Hutchinson is one of 100 Victorians trying to plot a path through the state's obesity epidemic as a member of a citizens' jury.

And from today, *Herald Sun* readers can join them, with an online VicHealth/*Herald Sun* survey assessing community attitudes about everything from fast food restaurant bans to junk food advertising and sugar taxes.

Results of the survey will form a submission to next month's citizens' jury on obesity forum, which will result in recommendations to guide health policy in a state

GRANT McARTHUR

where two-thirds are now overweight or obese.

Ms Hutchinson, a healthcare worker, is one of the first randomly selected to sit on the jury.

"We're in trouble if things continue on the trajectory they are on," she said. "I am fearful for the future in terms of the cost to the health system and the lost years of people's lives.

"If the environment is programmed in such a way that all we can do is gain weight, it is a bad situation."

The 100 VicHealth obesity jury members are holding talks and gathering information ahead of the October 17-18 forum, where they will hear from a range of experts, some from abroad.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the forum would turn the tables on traditional policy making, with everyday Victorians given a powerful say.

"We hope this will spark community debate and generate a social movement for change," he said.

GIVE YOUR VIEW ON OBESITY POLICY: HERALDSUN.COM.AU