

AUSTRALIAN CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



MEDIA RELEASE

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Fast food menu labelling sets pace for action on obesity

Australia' largest disease prevention groups have congratulated the Victorian Government on its decision to introduce nutrition labelling on fast food menus.

According to Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance Chair, Professor Ian Olver, the initiative should help tackle growing rates of obesity and overweight in Australia.

"Nutrition labelling on fast food menus will provide essential information to consumers to help them make healthier choices when they eat out. This is increasingly important as food eaten away from home accounts for a growing proportion of our diet," Professor Olver said.

"Nutrition labelling will also provide incentives for fast food outlets to increase their range of healthier options and reformulate products to lower kilojoule (calorie) counts," he said.

"I call on other states as well as the Australian government to follow Victoria's lead and introduce mandatory nutrition labelling on restaurant menus across the country," Professor Olver said.

Professor Olver said the United States had introduced nutrition labelling in restaurants with promising early results and that menu labelling was recommended by the National Preventative Health Taskforce as part of its comprehensive obesity strategy.

"While Premier Brumby 's initiative does not go as far as the US scheme or the Taskforce recommendation because it applies only to very large fast food chains, it still represents a major milestone for Australia." Professor Olver said.

"It must become a stepping stone towards a more comprehensive national scheme and towards further initiatives to curb Australia's escalating rates of obesity and overweight," he said.

"Restricting advertising of unhealthy foods to children and introducing front-of-pack nutrition labelling on packaged foods to guide people to healthier choices at a glance are also critical initiatives to help Australians to maintain a healthy weight and must be introduced as soon as possible."

"Being overweight or obese substantially increases your risk of developing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, kidney disease and some cancer," Professor Olver said.

"With two out of three adults and one in four children in Australia now overweight or obese we need to do everything we can to help Australians achieve and maintain a healthy weight."

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Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance members: Cancer Council Australia; Diabetes Australia; Kidney Health Australia; Heart Foundation; National Stroke Foundation.