

**Media Release – Under embargo until 00:01 Monday 19 June****Australia’s leading chronic disease organisations welcome proposal for legislation to tackle unhealthy food marketing to kids**

The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) has welcomed [Dr Sophie Scamps proposed amendment to the Broadcasting Services Act 1992](#), which it says will do more to create optimal conditions to help children to be better nourished and reduce their risk of chronic disease.

More than 12 million Australians live with one or more chronic disease, with unhealthy diet among the leading contributors to chronic disease burden.

Not only does healthy diet promote physical and mental health and wellbeing, but unhealthy diets are linked to numerous chronic conditions, including several cancers, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease and stroke. Diet related hypertension and obesity can increase the probability of chronic conditions later in life and exacerbate other chronic conditions including lung disease.

Children can thrive when they are given the best start in life, and ensuring they are well nourished can set the stage for them and more Australians to enjoy long, healthy lives with less chronic disease.

But with more children spending more of their lives consuming all types of commercial media, children are immersed in a world of relentless promotion of harmful products like unhealthy food and drinks. It makes sense to do more to ensure all the places and spaces young people spend time support them to be healthy.

“ACDPA welcomes Dr Scamps’ ‘Healthy Kids Advertising Bill’, a measure which can help ensure the spaces young people spend their time help them to be healthy and thrive by reducing their exposure to unhealthy food and drinks marketing,” said Lucy Westerman, ACDPA Executive Officer.

Unhealthy food and drink marketing is prominent in children’s lives, influencing food choices and contributing to illness in the short and long term. Removing the spotlight from unhealthy food and drinks by reducing children’s exposure to harmful marketing is a policy aspiration of the [National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030](#)<sup>i</sup>.

Justine Caine, Group CEO of Diabetes Australia, an ACDPA member, said research showed children were being bombarded with junk food advertisements.

“A child who watches 80 minutes of television per day will see around 800 junk food advertisements a year,” Ms Cain said. “The advertisements are designed to encourage children to make unhealthy food choices that can lead to weight gain and ultimately set children up for unhealthy lives and a greater risk of serious chronic conditions like type

2 diabetes. As a community we need to do more to protect our children from the very serious chronic conditions that can result from regular unhealthy food choices. Together we can affect change.”

With growing global evidence from dozens of countries, the [World Health Organization](#) recommends policies like restricting marketing as one of the most effective and cost effective ways to protect children from chronic disease and childhood obesity, also freeing up space to promote and support healthy diets.

Applauding the proposed Bill, Clare Hughes, Chair of the Nutrition, Alcohol and Physical Activity Committee Cancer Council Australia, an ACDPA member, noted that evidence shows that children’s exposure to unhealthy food marketing influences what foods and drinks they want to consume, and it can shape their perception of what a healthy diet looks like.

“Research shows that industry codes are full of loopholes that fail to protect children from the unhealthy influence of food marketing. Promotion drives consumption, and this can lead to obesity and increased risk of 13 different types of cancer and other serious disease later in life.” Ms Hughes said.

[ACDPA recommends](#) restricting [unhealthy food marketing](#) as part of a comprehensive approach to improving Australian diets and reducing diet related chronic disease, alongside [enhancing and mandating Australia’s health stars front of pack labelling scheme](#), introducing a [levy on sugar-sweetened beverages](#), restricting promotion and sale of unhealthy foods in child-focused [environments](#) like schools, and [stronger time-bound targets for processed food reformulation to improve nutrient profiles](#).

“With nearly 40% of chronic disease burden preventable, ACDPA supports accelerated government action and investment in prevention, including strong policies that help create healthier environments for children. Taking unhealthy food out of the spotlight for children will help improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians at all stages of life” concluded Ms Westerman.

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#### **Full Comments attributable to ACDPA members:**

##### **Cancer Council Australia:**

##### **Attribute to: Clare Hughes, Chair of Cancer Council’s Nutrition, Alcohol and Physical Activity Committee**

“Cancer Council applauds the proposed Bill for prioritising the future of our children’s health by addressing the impact of unhealthy food marketing. The evidence shows that children’s exposure to unhealthy food marketing influences what foods and drinks they want to consume, and it can shape their perception of what a healthy diet looks like.

“Research shows that industry codes are full of loopholes that fail to protect children from the unhealthy influence of food marketing. Promotion drives consumption, and this can lead to obesity and increased risk of 13 different types of cancer and other serious disease later in life.

“We all want our children to enjoy a healthy childhood and long life afterwards; Cancer Council hopes to see the Bill come to fruition so we can better protect our children from the harmful effects of unhealthy food marketing.”

## **Diabetes Australia**

### **Attribute to: Justine Cain, Diabetes Australia Group CEO**

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“The advertisements are designed to encourage children to make unhealthy food choices that can lead to weight gain and ultimately set children up for unhealthy lives and a greater risk of serious chronic conditions like type 2 diabetes. As a community we need to do more to protect our children from the very serious chronic conditions that can result from regular unhealthy food choices. Together we can affect change.”

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**About ACDPA:** The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) brings together Cancer Council Australia, Diabetes Australia, Heart Foundation, Kidney Health Australia, Stroke Foundation, and Lung Foundation Australia. Together we advocate for the long-term health and wellbeing of Australians by providing a powerful voice for those living with, or at risk of, chronic disease. [www.acdpa.org.au](http://www.acdpa.org.au)

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<sup>i</sup> National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030: desired Policy Achievement by 2030: *Children’s exposure to unhealthy food and drink marketing, branding and sponsorships is further restricted across all forms of media, including through digital media.*