

AUSTRALIAN CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



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Time for national roll out of nutrition labelling on fast food menus

Australia's largest disease prevention groups are calling for mandatory nutrition labelling on fast food menus to be rolled out across Australia following the announcement that NSW will follow Victoria's lead and legislate to require fast food outlets to display the kilojoule value of food and drinks on their menus.

According to Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance Chair, Professor Greg Johnson, the initiative should help to tackle growing rates of obesity and overweight in Australia by making people aware of how many kilojoules they are consuming when they eat out.

"Nutrition labelling on fast food menus will give consumers the information they need 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," he said.

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

Professor Johnson said that menu labelling should include information on salt, saturated fat and sugar levels as well as kilojoules as reducing consumption of these nutrients was important to maintain good health.

"The United States has introduced kilojoule labelling in restaurants with promising early results and menu labelling was recommended by the National Preventative Health Taskforce as part of its comprehensive obesity strategy," Professor Johnson said.

"While the NSW and Victorian initiatives could go further they still represent a major milestone for Australia in the journey towards a more comprehensive national scheme for menu labelling and towards further initiatives to curb Australia's escalating rates of obesity and overweight" Professor Johnson 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."

"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."

Media contact: Franca Marine: 0280634112; 0432 567 413; franca.marine@cancer.org.au
Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance members: Cancer Council Australia; Diabetes Australia; Kidney Health Australia; Heart Foundation; National Stroke Foundation.