

## AUSTRALIAN CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### Report adds weight to need for comprehensive obesity strategy

A report into the implications of obesity for the Australian health system has been welcomed by the nation's largest independent disease prevention groups as adding further support to calls to urgently implement a comprehensive national obesity strategy.

"With two out of three Australian adults and one in four children now overweight or obese, and obesity alone estimated to cost over \$58 billion per year, we must take action to avert a future legacy of escalating rates of obesity-related chronic disease," said Professor Ian Olver, Chair of the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance.

Commenting on the *Weighing it up* report from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Aging, Professor Olver welcomed the Committee's multi-sectoral approach which recommends action by government, industry, communities, and individuals to address Australia's growing weight problem.

"However, I would have liked to see a stronger stance on restricting advertising of unhealthy foods to kids that recognises the limitations of industry self-regulation in this area," Professor Olver said.

Many of the recommendations of the *Weighing it up* report support and complement the proposals for a comprehensive obesity strategy made by the National Preventative Health Task Force, which is due to present its final report later this month.

"I strongly urge the government to respond swiftly and positively to the recommendations of both reports and implement a comprehensive obesity control strategy that addresses the many factors which contribute to rising obesity rates," Professor Olver said.

"The strategy will need to include a range of measures to encourage increased physical activity and improve nutrition and will need to take a hard line on issues such as restricting advertising of unhealthy food to children and adopting a front of pack food labelling system that guides people at a glance to healthier food products.

"Prevention is the key to curbing escalating rates of chronic disease as levels of obesity and overweight, poor nutrition and physical activity in the community rise," Professor Olver said. "We need to act now."

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*Members of the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance are: Cancer Council Australia, Diabetes Australia, Kidney Health Australia, the National Heart Foundation of Australia and the National Stroke Foundation.*