



AUSTRALIA'S LEADING CHRONIC DISEASE GROUPS APPLAUD MINISTERS' DECISION TO ADOPT STAR RATING SYSTEM FOR FRONT OF PACK LABELING OF PACKAGED FOOD

Australia's leading chronic disease groups have today applauded the nation's food regulation ministers for endorsing a new star-based health rating system for the front-of-pack for processed, packaged food products.

Poor nutrition and obesity are major risk factors for chronic diseases in Australia, including heart disease, diabetes, cancer, stroke and kidney disease.

Professor Greg Johnson, Chair of the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) said today "The new health star rating system will help consumers make healthier food choices by providing clear information on the amounts of saturated fats, sugars and salt in packaged foods.

"The use of a standard measure of 100grams for the nutritional information will help people make direct comparisons between different foods."

The ACDPA has been closely involved in the development of the new health star rating system for the past 18 months with two representatives serving on the project committee, chaired by the secretary of the federal health department, Jane Halton.

"We have worked closely and collaboratively to reach a consensus agreement between public health and consumer groups, all governments as well as key industry groups," said Prof Johnson.

"We believe the star system has a lot of merit, will be readily understood and used by consumers and will help drive healthier food choices as well as reformulation by food manufacturers.

"We are pleased that food regulation ministers have emphatically endorsed the health star rating system. "I want to pay tribute to all governments for endorsing this new national front of pack labelling system and especially to Jane Halton, who has personally chaired all meetings of the overarching project committee and worked hard to achieve consensus.

"The health star rating system will need careful monitoring and evaluation, but we believe it has enormous potential to improve health outcomes in Australia, helping people make healthier choices and improving the food supply.

"We are extremely pleased that ministers will consider making the scheme mandatory if widespread uptake is not achieved in two years," Prof Johnson said.

For Comment:

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