



Policies for tackling obesity and creating healthier food environments

**2019 progress update
South Australian
Government**

March 2019

Further details available at
www.foodpolicyindex.org.au

**SA
2019**

Executive summary

Unhealthy diets and obesity are leading contributors to poor health in Australia. Addressing obesity and improving population diets requires a comprehensive government response at Commonwealth and State/Territory levels.

In 2017, a Food Policy Index was developed for Australia to assess the food and diet-related policies that were in place in each jurisdiction, and identify recommended actions for each government based on international best practice.

This report provides a follow up to the 2017 Food Policy Index report. It summarises and assesses the actions taken by the South Australian Government (July 2016 – December 2018) in relation to the recommended policies identified in the 2017 report.

Key areas in which the South Australian Government has made progress



Development of the *Better Prevention for a Healthy South Australia* policy, and the formation of the Prevention and Population Health Branch (PPHB)



Commitment to establish *Wellbeing SA* as a Prevention, Health Promotion and Primary Health Care agency, within SA Health, including plans for a health promotion branch and focus on preventing health issues before they arise



Continuing implementation of a health-in-all-policies approach through the use of Public Health Partner Authority (PHPA) Agreements



Recommended action areas for the South Australian Government

The 2017 Food Policy Index report prioritised 16 recommendations for action. Recommended focus areas for the next 12-18 months are:



Food promotion: Implement policies to restrict unhealthy food and beverage advertising in settings controlled or managed by the South Australian Government



Food provision: Establish a whole-of-government policy on healthy food procurement and provision across all South Australian Government departments and settings under government control



Food provision: Continue efforts to monitor food environments and ensure compliance with existing policies, particularly in schools and health facilities

Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI)

In 2017, a Food Policy Index was developed for Australia to assess the extent to which governments in Australia were implementing globally recommended policies for tackling obesity and creating healthier food environments.¹

The project was conducted as part of INFORMAS,² an international network of food policy and public health experts. The project implemented the Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) tool, developed by INFORMAS to assess government policy across 14 domains related to food environments and applied in >10 countries. As part of the Food-EPI Australia 2017 project, recommended actions for each government (Federal, State and Territory) were developed and prioritised, based on international best practice and consultation with >100 non-government public health experts representing 53 organisations.

Assessment of progress made

The Food-EPI Australia 2017 report identified and prioritised 16 recommended policy actions for the South Australian Government, as part of efforts to create healthier food environments and address obesity.

The purpose of this 2019 Progress Update was to assess progress made by the South Australian Government in relation to the recommended policy actions.

Government officials from each jurisdiction in Australia provided information on actions taken by their government in relation to the recommended actions from the Food-EPI Australia 2017 report. This included all activities from **July 2016** (the date up to which policies were assessed in the 2017 report) to **December 2018**.

The actions were summarised, and progress in relation to each recommendation was assessed by the project team as 'Substantive action', 'Some action' or 'Limited action', based on the criteria in Table 1. The full details of actions taken and progress made by other jurisdictions are available at: www.foodpolicyindex.org.au

Substantive action

- Implemented substantive action in relation to all or most components of the recommendation

Some action

- Implemented action in relation to some components of the recommendation; and/or
- Taken steps to initiate or formulate plans in relation to the recommendation, but relevant actions have not yet been implemented

Limited action

- Taken no substantive action in relation to the recommendation; and/or
- Made no or very limited progress in the area

Table 1: Criteria for assessment of progress made

¹ Sacks G for the Food-EPI Australia project team. Policies for tackling obesity and creating healthier food environments: scorecard and priority recommendations for Australian governments. Melbourne: Deakin University, 2017. Available at: www.foodpolicyindex.org.au

² www.informas.org

Actions taken (July 2016 - December 2018) by the South Australian Government in relation to the recommended policies from the 2017 Food Policy Index report

	Domain	Recommended policy action	Progress in relation to recommended action	Assessment
SA1	Leadership	Develop a comprehensive strategy, with a clear implementation plan and associated funding, that includes addressing population nutrition needs in South Australia	In 2018 the SA government renewed its focus on prevention through its <i>Better Prevention for a Healthy South Australia policy</i> , which delivers prevention outcomes through five key strategic levers that include aspects of nutrition. The Prevention and Population Health Branch (PPHB), formed in 2017, committed to develop a PPHB Prevention Plan, which focuses on healthy eating and physical activity to prevent NCDs, and has recruited two public health nutritionists to support progress.	Substantive action
SA2	Food provision	Mandate implementation of the 'Right Bite' canteen policy in all schools / preschools. Monitor compliance and introduce reporting mechanisms, incentives and stronger support systems to increase awareness and compliance	'Right Bite' school canteen policy is mandated for schools and preschools. Principals and Governing Councils are responsible for ensuring the policy is adhered to. Support and advice is provided through online resources and through the Department of Education. A review of Right Bite is planned, and an awareness and communication campaign will be included.	Some action
SA3	Food promotion	Restrict the promotion of unhealthy food and beverages in settings controlled / managed by the South Australian Government	Through the COAG Health Council (CHC) Obesity Working Group, the SA Department of Health and Wellbeing (DHW) has contributed to the development of a national interim guide to reduce the exposure of children to unhealthy food and drink marketing in settings under government control. This was endorsed by CHC in August 2018.	Some action
SA4	Monitoring and intelligence	Implement ongoing monitoring of food environments, including the marketing of unhealthy foods to children, and the nutritional quality of food available in schools and public sector settings	The Department of Education provided a grant to the SA Schools Canteen Network to provide support to school canteens and facilitate menu audits and product assessment services for schools. PPHB is planning a review of the Healthy Food and Drink Choices for Staff and Visitors in SA Health Facilities policy. PPHB will develop a strategy to improve healthy food provision in government (e.g., schools, prisons, health facilities) and monitoring mechanisms will be considered within the future strategy.	Some action
SA5	Leadership	Support local governments to develop and implement Regional Public Health Plans that include actions to create healthy food environments and improve population nutrition	The State Public Health Plan (2019-24) encourages local councils to consider healthy food environments and nutrition through building stronger communities, healthier environments, and preventing chronic disease. The 'Creating Healthier Local Food Environments - A Guide for Local Government' resource tool was developed to assist local councils in assessing their policies, plans and practices in relation to supporting healthy eating (City of Adelaide is currently implementing recommendations from the tool).	Some action
SA6	Funding and resources	Establish an independent, statutory health promotion agency, with a secure funding stream, that includes an objective to improve population nutrition	Under the <i>Better Prevention for a Healthy South Australia policy</i> , the new SA Government has committed to establish "Wellbeing SA" as a Prevention, Health Promotion and Primary Health Care agency, within SA Health. Separate from hospitals and health services, Wellbeing SA will be able to advocate for and purchase services in public health and health promotion – it will include a health promotion branch and focus on preventing health issues before they arise.	Substantive action
SA7	Food promotion	Require all organisations that receive funding from the South Australian Government to restrict all promotion (including sponsorship) related to unhealthy food and beverages as a condition of receiving funding	A short clause, reflecting a requirement to ensure food provision and partnerships are in line with national nutrition guidelines, has been trialled within service agreements for workplace health with peak industry bodies.	Some action

SA8	Food provision	Establish a whole-of-government policy on healthy food procurement and provision across all SA Government departments and settings under government control	PPHB will progress improvements in healthy food provision in government settings including schools, children's sport and recreation settings, health facilities and prisons. Two new public health nutrition positions have been established, and steps have been taken to review policies in relation to public sector health care facilities and to explore opportunities for healthy food procurement.	Some action
SA9	Support for communities	Commit to ongoing, long-term support for social marketing campaigns promoting healthy eating, as part of broader efforts to improve population nutrition	PPHB Strategic Plan 2018-2020 identifies 'Communication and social marketing' as a key function of the Branch. Social marketing campaigns have been undertaken in relation to several initiatives that include a healthy eating component, including Healthy Kids Menu Initiative, Healthy Workers Healthy Futures (2017-18 final campaign), Get Healthy (2018 advertising campaign).	Some action
SA10	Support for communities	Building on the work of OPAL, put in place overarching state-wide structures and resources, to provide broad and coordinated support for creating and maintaining healthy food environments at the community level across multiple settings	DHW funds the SA Community Foodies program which aims to increase knowledge and healthy behaviours in vulnerable communities. Through the Healthy Towns Challenge (launched June 2018), the state government will invest \$1 million over four years to provide grants to regional towns to develop approaches to reduce preventable diseases and improve healthy wellbeing. There are several resources in place to support workplaces, food outlets and community/primary health care settings.	Some action
SA11	Food retail	Develop and implement programs to incentivise sports and recreation venues and clubs to sell healthier foods and beverages whilst limiting unhealthy foods and beverages	DHW actively contributes to the Obesity Working Group under CHC, of which one of the prevention actions is limiting the impact of unhealthy food and drink on children within children sport and recreation settings. The Healthy Kids Menu initiative sets criteria for healthy food provision, and one recreation centre and two surf lifesaving clubs have signed on to the initiative.	Some action
SA12	Food provision	Provide greater support for early childhood services to develop and implement best practice healthy food policies	The Department of Education's Learning Together Program incorporates nutrition and healthy eating, and supports families to make healthy food choices. Some Learning Together programs have partnered with community organisations (e.g., KickStart for Kids, Foodbank, Community Foodies and Community Food SA) to provide access to healthier foods and support in cooking meals.	Some action
SA13	Food retail	Explore applying the 'Healthy Kids Menus Initiative' to all food service outlets / restaurants, including schemes to incentivise restaurants, pubs and clubs to improve the healthiness of menu options	The Healthy Kids Menu (HKM) initiative is currently running in SA with >40 food outlets signed on board. HKM has also partnered up with ICT & Digital Government to run a 'D3 challenge' for HKM. As a result, a local business has received seed funding from the challenge to rollout their business model that is focused on providing pre-prepared healthy kids meal items to food outlets.	Some action
SA14	Monitoring and intelligence	Introduce regular measuring of children's height and weight at key stages of primary and secondary schools, on an 'opt-out' consent basis	The Department of Education recognises that monitoring of children's height / weight would need to be part of a comprehensive program of health and wellbeing and is currently considering the development of a healthy living and physical education strategy.	Limited action
SA15	Governance	Continue a health-in-all-policies approach to relevant government priorities. Ensure that where priorities are relevant to population nutrition / health issues, these are considered at each stage of the policy development process	The health-in-all-policies approach continues to be implemented by Health Determinants and Policy within the PPHB, including using Public Health Partner Authority (PHPA) Agreements. Where relevant, nutrition is considered as part of the work under the PHPA Agreements. A number of new agreements have been entered into that explicitly include nutrition considerations.	Substantive action
SA16	Food labelling	Enhance existing menu labelling regulations by requiring food outlets to display interpretive nutrition labelling (e.g., adaptation of the HSR scheme)	In June, 2018 the ANZ Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation agreed that further targeted consultation is to be undertaken to improve and strengthen fast food menu labelling in Australia. DHW will continue to support this national agenda, however there are no plans to enhance menu labelling at the state level.	Some action

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The project forms part of INFORMAS (International Network for Food and Obesity/NCD's Research, Monitoring, Action and Support), a global network of public interest organisations and researchers that seek to monitor and benchmark public and private sector actions to create healthier food environments and reduce obesity and NCD's globally.

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For more details on the Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) project go to: www.foodpolicyindex.org.au

