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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cancer Council Australia and public health leaders call for junk food marketing restrictions

Latest data shows more than one in four children are living with overweight or obesity

Cancer Council Australia and a coalition of public health leaders are calling on the Australian Government to take action on unhealthy food marketing aimed at children.

The Australian government is being urged to respond to a feasibility study on options to limit unhealthy food marketing, as new *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare* data reveals one in four Australian children and adolescents (aged 2–17) are living with overweight or obesity.

Following a Preventive Health Roundtable convened by Dr Sophie Scamps MP, a coalition of public health leaders, including Cancer Council Australia, has united to release a joint statement highlighting that Australian children are being bombarded by the marketing of unhealthy food and drinks online, across social media, gaming platforms, sport sponsorships, retail settings and more.

The joint statement calls for comprehensive new laws that will reduce children’s exposure to unhealthy food and drink marketing in all the places they live, learn, play and spend their time.

Living with overweight or obesity significantly increases the risk of 13 different types of cancer, including breast (post-menopause), bowel, kidney, liver, endometrial, ovarian, stomach, thyroid, oesophagus, gallbladder, pancreas, multiple myeloma and prostate (advanced) cancers.

Cancer Council Australia’s CEO Jacinta Reddan said the Australian Government needs to move swiftly to better protect children and adolescents from the normalisation of unhealthy foods and drinks through marketing and advertising which interferes with parents' best efforts to encourage healthy habits.

“The reality is children today are more likely to be living with obesity than previous generations, highlighting the need for the Australian Government to respond to the feasibility study and move forward with measures to reduce children’s exposure to unhealthy food marketing,” she said.

“You only need to watch some adverts about the FIFA World Cup to see how junk food companies are targeting children through popular sporting events – it’s time to blow the whistle on junk food marketing to protect children’s health.

“Cancer Council Australia believes children should be able to grow up in an environment that supports healthy choices, not one that sells them on products that put their long-term health at risk.”

In 2022, 96% of adults did not meet the recommended serves of fruit and vegetables ([Source](#)), and the average Australian consumed 67 grams of free sugar per day, more than 1.3 times the recommended amount ([Source](#)).

“Living with overweight is estimated to be linked to more than 5,200 cases of cancer in Australia each year and it’s the leading risk factor contributing to ill health and death. We cannot afford to wait and continue to let our children be exposed to a barrage of junk food marketing,” said Ms Reddan.

“Children deserve environments that support healthy choices, not relentless advertising for foods that harm their future. Without stronger regulation, junk food marketing will continue to shape children’s health for the worse. If we’re serious about children’s health, we must get serious about regulating junk food marketing.”

Implementing government regulation to protect children from the marketing of unhealthy foods and drinks is a key priority in Cancer Council Australia’s obesity policy: <https://www.cancer.org.au/about-us/policy-and-advocacy/prevention/obesity>

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Contact details

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About Cancer Council Australia

Cancer Council Australia is Australia’s leading cancer charity, working to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians. Cancer Council Australia works with its members, the eight state and territory Cancer Councils to:

- Undertake and fund cancer research
- Prevent and control cancer
- Provide information and support for people affected by cancer
- Shape and influence policy and practice

Find out more at [cancer.org.au](https://www.cancer.org.au), or visit our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

