

NEW REPORT: PHAA CALLS FOR OVERHAUL OF FOOD POLICY

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has today released a new report – ***A Future for Food*** – which calls for a complete overhaul of food policy in Australia in order to more effectively address the national priorities of chronic disease prevention, climate change and social inequality.

According to Michael Moore, CEO of the PHAA “Food is a critical issue across public health, the environment, social policy and the economy – and yet we have a fragmented approach. It is imperative we act now to establish a national, integrated whole-of-government food policy.”

“We have a food supply skewed to inappropriate and overly processed foods that are high in sugar, fat and salt; there is inadequate understanding of the environmental impacts of food choices; and we have people struggling to afford healthy food to feed their families.”

“We cannot afford to continue to do business as usual. And with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) currently reviewing dietary recommendations in this country, it is imperative we act now,” said Michael Moore.

A Future for Food: Addressing public health, sustainability and equity from paddock to plate, states that the selection of foods for Australian guidelines has been largely based on nutrition science, which emphasises the adequacy of specific nutrients rather than whole foods. “But we eat food not nutrients,” said Mr Moore.

The PHAA is concerned that current guidelines offer inadequate consideration of:

- the **chronic disease risk** of certain foods despite their capacity to provide adequate nutrients;
- the **environmental impact** of those food choices; and
- **cultural and equity issues** – including at the very minimum affordability for all Australians.

“In reviewing the research on chronic disease, environmental sustainability and social equity, we believe it is imperative that food recommendations have a stronger emphasis on whole, or minimally processed, and plant-based foods,” said Michael Moore.

In addition to calling on the government to establish a national integrated food policy, the PHAA is calling on the NHMRC to address these issues in its current review. “We want public health and food professionals, food industry and consumers to join our call for action at phaa.net.au. We must work together and act now,” said Mr Moore.

Michael Moore, CEO of the PHAA, will be available from 10:30am – 11.30am today at the Press Boxes in the Press Gallery at Parliament House in Canberra to provide interviews and further comment.

Contact: Michael Moore CEO PHAA 0417 249 731

For more information and a .pdf copy of ***A Future for Food*** visit www.phaa.net.au

*The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is a non-party-political organisation with a membership drawn from more than 40 health-related professions. The Association makes a major contribution to health policy in Australia and has branches in every State and Territory. www.phaa.net.au. **A Future for Food** is an initiative of the PHAA, developed with specific input and guidance from the PHAA Food and Nutrition Special Interest Group, presentations at the Population Health Congress held in July 2008 and the PHAA Nutrition Round Table held in June 2008. It was made possible by an unencumbered educational grant from the Sanitarium Health Food Company.*