

**PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**  
**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**AMA POSITION ON OBESITY MAKES GOOD SENSE**

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHA) announced its support today for the Australian Medical Association's (AMA) policy on obesity. The AMA launched its new policy yesterday, emphasising the point that obesity is a whole-of-society problem.

"The Public Health Association agrees that stakeholders across a number of sectors need to work together to address obesity in the Australian community. Federal and state governments, the food industry and relevant non-government organisations need to ensure that action on obesity is high on their agenda," said Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer.

"Australian Health Ministers recently agreed to make obesity a National Health Priority Area and develop a National Obesity Strategy through the National Preventative Health Taskforce. This decision is a step in the right direction in terms of action by governments. The AMA yesterday encouraged food industry stakeholders, including supermarkets, to do their bit as well.

"The AMA has called on supermarkets to responsibly display and place products to encourage healthy purchases by shoppers. The AMA also wants to see urban planning regulations at the local level ensure that new housing developments provide easy local access to retail outlets for fruit and vegetables.

"They are advocating higher taxes on junk food and sugary soft drinks; government subsidies to ensure the availability of healthy foods in remote areas; and banning the advertising of junk food to children. The PHA supports these policy suggestions as part of a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to reducing rates of obesity in the longer term.

"In 2004/05, more than half of Australian adults were overweight or obese and obesity is now challenging smoking as the major cause of preventable death in Australia. The PHA supports the AMA's efforts to work with a broad range of stakeholders including industry to reduce the impact that obesity is currently having on the health of Australians," said Mr Moore.

**For further information:**

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