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Food labelling – up to jurisdictions to put public health before profits

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is now calling on State and Territory Ministers to put public health ahead of profits in managing food labelling. In its response today to the Blewett [Labelling Logic](#) report the federal government has failed to adopt a simple and straight forward system of traffic light labelling.

Michael Moore, CEO of the PHAA said, “Although the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, the Hon Catherine King MP, has responded positively to a wide range of the recommendations in the Blewett report, recommendation 50 regarding traffic light labelling is seen as key to battling the exponential increase in obesity and with it escalating human and monetary costs associated with chronic disease – particularly diabetes and cardio-vascular disease.

“The effective labelling of food is not just about adults. There is overwhelming evidence that our children are becoming more obese and it is incumbent upon us as a society to take every action possible to deal with the epidemic of poor nutrition and obesity.”

The industry has put huge effort into persuading the government and opposition they are capable of providing nutrition information through self-regulation based on a labelling system outlining ‘% daily intake’.

“The industry’s system is a joke - you need a PhD to be able to interpret it and a significant amount of time to apply it to particular foods. It is just a system that provides a façade of action rather than genuinely providing easy to interpret information.

“If people are to be able to make real choices about healthy eating they need an easy and simple method to interpret information. The most effective way to achieve this is through a multiple traffic light system on the front of packs. We call on all State and Territory Ministers at their meeting next week to support the right of people to be able to make a genuine healthy choice above the profits of multi-national companies,” concluded Mr Moore.

For further information/comment:

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[Recommendation 50:](#) That an interpretative front-of-pack labelling system be developed that is reflective of a comprehensive Nutrition Policy and agreed public health priorities.