

JUNK FOOD ADVERTISING CLAIMS A SHAM, SAYS PHAA

The food industry's claims to have reduced marketing to children are "a self-serving sham", according to the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA).

PHAA President Professor Mike Daube said,

"The truth is that our children are being ruthlessly exposed to junk food marketing. The food industry's "Responsible Marketing Initiative" is so feebly phrased that it is meaningless. It only covers advertising "to children under 12", ignoring the reality that children watch advertising at all hours and of all kinds. The code only covers specified forms of direct advertising, but fails to cover areas like sports sponsorship, where there has been a massive increase in promotion of junk food."

Events such as the KFC Big Bash have been shown to promote junk food for over 50% of playing time. Over the last weekend any kids watching the first round of the AFL would have seen players as mobile billboards for junk food, with junk food ads on TV and around the grounds. The Hungry Jack's Whopper is advertised as "the official burger of the AFL". Virtually all the major televised sports and teams now have some form of junk food sponsorship. No wonder we have an obesity pandemic".

"Any claims of a reduction in junk food promotion to kids will have no credibility while the codes are self-administered, feeble and take no account of children's exposure to the industry's massive marketing spend", Professor Daube said. "The National Preventative Health Taskforce recommended that junk food marketing should be phased out from television before 9 p.m. The industry is clearly desperate to avoid this measure, which could do so much to benefit the health of our children".

Professor Daube concluded, "We need an impartial body - unconnected with the food or advertising industries - to write, monitor and implement the rules. The present approach is a self-serving sham that allows children of all ages to be exposed to junk food marketing at all hours of the day".

ENDS

For further information/comment:

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