

Australian Food Systems Failure – Conference calls for action

The Australian food system is failing and action needs to be taken in a coordinated way by all governments if the situation is to be turned around.

The most obvious example is our crisis of obesity and overweight but there are questions of food security and equity that are fundamental to Australia's health and economic well being. This is the theme of the Public Health Association of Australia's (PHAA) *Food Futures: an Australian Perspective* Conference in Canberra today and tomorrow on 20-21 April.

CEO of the PHAA, Michael Moore, said "This is a serious matter. The PHAA conference will examine the significance of new global burden estimates that rank food and obesity related issues as vying with tobacco as the major inducer of national and international ill health. Information recently published from Western Australia shows that high body mass has taken over from tobacco as the leading preventable risk factor," he added.

"This is a crisis that needs urgent action by governments at all levels and all sectors. It is a systems failure that, if present trends continue, will shorten the lifespans of our children. We cannot let this happen."

We need leadership from national and all governments to deal with the wide range of issues that are leading to the systems breakdown and the action required for prevention".

In addition to issues of obesity and other food related illness the Conference will discuss the impact of food on the environment, agriculture, food security and social issues.

The Conference will today hear from keynote speakers including leading international experts such as Professor Philip James and Professor Tim Lobstein who will identify the extent of the problems across our food systems and show the way to some solutions:

Food Futures: the challenges

- **W. Philip T. James** – Why the future of food is important for health
- **Jim Pratley** – Sustainable agriculture and the future of food

Rethinking Australia's future

- **Andrew Campbell** – Redesigning food systems for a carbon, water, energy and nutrient-constrained world
- **Sharon Friel** – An equitable food future in Australia: who, what and how
- **Tim Lobstein** - Food supply policies: Lessons from Europe

ENDS

For further information/comment:

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Food Futures Conference: www.phaa.net.au

CONFERENCE PROGRAM AND SPEAKERS: www.phaa.net.au/documents/Food_Conf_Program.pdf

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