

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **International expert on obesity warns National Conference about the growing pandemic**

Professor Philip James, an international expert on food policy and obesity will address the National *Food Futures* Conference of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA). “The message for Australians is quite clear,” according to PHAA CEO Michael Moore, “unless action is taken by all governments the obesity pandemic and other dietary related diseases will increase chronic conditions and will prove costly in both economic and health terms”.

The PHAA has brought Professor James to Australia as the keynote speaker for the *Food Futures: an Australian Perspective* Conference in Canberra on 20-21 April.

In addressing the conference, Professor James argued, “There is now more than ever a need for more stringent nutritional goals and an urgent resetting of agricultural and food chain policies and practices. Health professionals and governments need to pay attention to the impact of climate change as well as the new evidence of the generational amplification of chronic diseases by pre-existing maternal and childhood malnutrition. It is important to develop a national and world perspective on nutrient intakes”.

According to Professor James, “The focus on a “balanced” but cheap diet precipitated the emergence of chronic diseases. It is of great concern that Western food industries are now taking over the food systems of the developing world, particularly with 80% of chronic diseases already occurring in lower income countries”.

“This is a serious matter. The PHAA conference will need to consider 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,” he added.

CEO of the PHAA, Michael Moore said “Professor James is in Australia to highlight the concerns of health professionals who understand the importance of prevention. It is no longer enough for governments to pay lip service to prevention. The time has come for a coordinated approach across Federal, State and local governments”.

*\* Professor Philip James CBE, DSc, MD, FRCP, FRSE, MFPHM is Director, Public Health Policy Group; President of the International Association for the Study of obesity; Hon. Professor of Nutrition, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, UK*

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**Food Futures Conference: [www.phaa.net.au](http://www.phaa.net.au)**

**CONFERENCE PROGRAM AND SPEAKERS: [www.phaa.net.au/documents/Food\\_Conf\\_Program.pdf](http://www.phaa.net.au/documents/Food_Conf_Program.pdf)**

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