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## **INDUSTRY SELF-REGULATION FAILS: JUNK FOOD ADS STILL TARGET KIDS**

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is calling for government to take a harder line to curb fast food advertising. The current system of food industry self-regulation is failing to address junk food advertising targeting Australian kids.

“It’s no surprise to those of us in public health that research published yesterday in the *Medical Journal of Australia* showed children’s exposure to fast food television advertising has not changed since the introduction of industry self regulation. Fast foods are most often high in fat, salt, sugar and kilojoules –the very nutrients health recommendations are trying to encourage people to reduce,” said PHAA’s Food and Nutrition Special Interest Group spokesperson Dr Christina Pollard, Research Fellow at Curtin University.

“Chicken Treat, Hungry Jacks, McDonald’s, KFC, Oporto, Pizza Hut and Red Rooster signed up to the Australian Quick Service Restaurant Industry (QSRI) Initiative for Responsible Advertising and Marketing to Children in August 2009. This self-regulatory initiative was implemented in response to concerns about advertising’s affect on children’s fast food intake and the high exposure in Australia.

“PHAA strongly supports this latest call from researchers for greater government regulation of fast food advertising, particularly as there is already substantial research demonstrating that kids’ exposure to these ads negatively influences their food intake. These new research findings also contradict comments made on the ABC’s Lateline program last week by Australian Food and Grocery Council chief executive, Kate Carnell, who claimed that industry self-regulation was an appropriate and effective approach,” said Dr Pollard.

The following comments are taken from a transcript of the program which aired on Wednesday 22 June:

*KATE CARNELL: “We have an industry code that has banned advertising of high fat, high sugar, high salt products to children.”*

“Clearly, industry considers that it has done its job in terms of banning junk food and drink advertising to children. What this research tells us is that they are kidding themselves. Not only has there been no reduction in fast food advertising directed at children, there has been an overall increase in fast food advertising since 2009.

“Self-regulation has failed to stop junk food advertising targeting children in Australia. These new findings support the body of evidence indicating that governments should take the lead in defining the policy framework for regulating fast-food advertising,” said Dr Pollard.

### **For further information/comment:**

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