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Dear Ms Kennedy

PHAA input re Nutrition Outputs of the ABS Australian Health Survey

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to recommendations for Nutrition Outputs of the ABS Australian Health Survey.

Nutrition practitioners, policy writers and academics have been very keen to see these results as we have been eager for some contemporary data to inform practice.

We believe the following end points should guide the determination of Nutrition Outputs. The PHAA seeks:

- Data which help describe Australian's diets against the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
- Data which help to describe changes in Australian's diets over time. This would require a bridging study, similar to that conducted between the 1985 and 1995 surveys.
- Data which link food intake with other key health behaviours and risk factors.
- Data at nutrient, food and food group level. These would include presentation of mean grams of foods eaten, isolation of discretionary foods, the contribution of discretionary choices within a food group such as chips in the vegetable group and juice in the fruit group.
- Data which describe other aspects of food and eating collected through this survey for example food security, commensal eating.

These are the key outputs which we believe are the responsibility of the ABS. We also recommend that data are available for further analysis by external agencies. We are aware that the co-ordinated collection of information on food intake, physical activity, health behaviours and biomedical markers means there is a rich data source from which important insights into the nutrition and food intake of Australians could be gleaned e.g. the linking of data collected from matched household pairs of adults and their dependent children, the identification of dietary patterns to health risk factors. These are possibilities that were not available in previous surveys. To support the use of these data, the release of results should be accompanied by a professional development program. It may also be appropriate to host events which bring together studies which are working with this data set, similar to those that occur with HILDA and LSAC data.

In addition to these recommendations we wish to re-iterate our support for an ongoing commitment to nutrition monitoring and surveillance by the Australian Government. The time gap between the 1995 and 2012 surveys was unacceptable and led to practice and investment decisions being made in an information vacuum and that were out of step with contemporary food and eating. The development of food standards is also reliant on dietary intake analyses within the risk and safety assessment determinations. For further background information and recommendations, we refer you to our Food and Nutrition Monitoring and Surveillance in Australia Policy (attached).

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the recommendations for Nutrition Outputs of the ABS Australian Health Survey.

Yours sincerely



Michael Moore
Chief Executive Officer
Public Health Association of Australia
(on behalf of the PHAA Food and Nutrition Special Interest Group)