



Public Health Association
AUSTRALIA

Unhealthy Marketing to Kids Forum

Melbourne, Australia, 11 June 2019

Protecting Australian children from gambling, alcohol and junk food marketing

COMMUNIQUE

We, the participants of the *Unhealthy Marketing to Children Forum* gathered in Melbourne on Tuesday 11 June 2019 to assess the harm linked to and regulation of unhealthy product marketing, join together to make the following statement.

We note that the marketing of junk food, alcohol and gambling increases the appeal of these products to consumers, and acknowledge the evidence that the exposure of children and adolescents to this marketing is associated with attitudes and/or behaviours that contribute to harm.

We understand that unhealthy product marketing is evolving rapidly and that vulnerable young consumers are exposed via the latest technological innovations. The growth of digital advertising and the ability for advertisers to now directly target individuals, undetected, add to our concerns.

We find that the aggressive marketing of these unhealthy products undermines children's rights and fuels some of Australia's most significant health and social burdens.

We find that the existing regulatory landscape is grossly inadequate. Current controls are a combination of legislation; unenforceable industry controlled quasi-regulatory schemes, voluntary codes of practice; and policy-led arrangements with inadequate monitoring and split responsibilities.

We believe this growing threat requires an urgent response from all levels of government, including policy makers, regulators and administrators.

We call for urgent action to develop a comprehensive regulatory system covering all forms of unhealthy product advertising beginning with:

1. A wide-ranging, independent review of all unhealthy product advertising and marketing;
2. Immediately legislating time-based controls that prohibit the broadcast of alcohol, junk food and gambling ads when children watch TV (including catch-up and subscription TV); and
3. Strengthened controls of digital marketing to reduce exposure of children to marketing of unhealthy products online.

The exposure of children to the marketing of alcohol, gambling and junk food is a collective problem that has reached a critical juncture.

We hereby commit to the goal of protecting Australian children from the ruthless, relentless marketing of harmful products – gambling, alcohol and junk food. We undertake to provide a more unified and targeted preventive health response and call upon all levels of government to collaborate with us to protect future generations from harm.

The forum was convened by the Public Health Association of Australia. Participants included FARE Australia's Trish Hepworth, the Obesity Policy Coalition's Jane Martin and Associate Professor, Samantha Thomas with Deakin University.