

COALITION ON FOOD ADVERTISING TO CHILDREN



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Speaking out against unhealthy food advertising to children

Press Release

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Industry self-regulation does not go far enough to protect children against inappropriate food advertising.

Commercial Television Australia has released a draft Industry Code of Practice for public comment. The draft Industry Code claims to have responded to concerns about rising obesity in children by strengthening the guidelines on advertising to children. At the same time the Australian Association of National Advertisers has also released a new Code of Advertising to Children which the Television Industry intends to adopt.

The Coalition on Food Advertising to Children has put a submission to Commercial Television Australia, saying that both Industry Codes will not adequately protect children from inappropriate advertising of unhealthy foods. Neither Code provides clear guidelines for advertisers or television stations to adopt socially responsible marketing to children.

The Television and Advertising Industries self-regulate their advertising practices through these Industry Codes. Some degree of government regulation exists through the Children's Television Standards administered by the Australian Broadcasting Authority. Both the Television and Advertising Industries have undertaken to comply with the Children's Television standards for all advertising directed at children.

Both the Advertising and Television Industry Codes provide no additional protection above what already exists through the Children's Television Standards. The Coalition on Food Advertising to Children considers that the Children's Television Standards are neither clear enough nor strong enough to protect the interests of children over commercial interests. The Children's Television Standards need to be reviewed at the same time as the Industry Codes to provide absolute clarity about the standards required to ensure that children are not bombarded by advertising for unhealthy foods.

Australian children are exposed to a high level of food advertising during morning, afternoon and evening programs and these advertisements mainly promote fast foods, chocolate and sweets. Eating a lot of these foods is linked with overweight and indeed too many Australian children are overweight or obese.

The Coalition on Food Advertising to Children (CFAC) is a group of organisations and prominent individuals who recognise that food advertising to children can be a problem for children's eating habits and future health. Members of the Coalition include the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the Australian Consumers Association, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and Dr. Rosemary Stanton.

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