

High obesity risks our healthy nation status

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Australia's failure to take effective national measures to combat high rates of obesity is placing at risk our standing as one of the world's healthiest nations, the Consumers Health Forum says.

"Australia enjoys enviable health outcomes but that is unlikely to last if we continue to experience among the world's highest levels of obesity," the CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells, said.

"In our 2018 Federal Budget submission, the Consumers Health Forum is appealing for investment in consumer-centred health policies so that we act now to ensure better health for our children.

"We urge the Government to move away from the current budgetary requirement for all new health expenditures to be offset by savings in the health portfolio.

"A concerted preventive health effort to reduce the disturbing levels of overweight and obesity now hitting two thirds of adults and 30 per cent of children would pay big dividends for our physical and fiscal health in the years to come.

"We recommend the Government establish obesity prevention as a national priority, with a national taskforce, sustained funding and evaluation of key measures including:

- Laws to stop exposure of children to unhealthy food and drink marketing on free to air television until 9.30 pm
- Mandatory healthy food star rating from July 2019 along with stronger food reformulation targets
- A national activity strategy to promote walking, cycling and public transport use
- A 20 per cent health levy on sugary drinks.

"Other important measures we need to take to improve health outcomes include greater funding of primary and integrated care and for a broader hospitals funding agreement to strengthen integrated care.

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Consumers shaping health

“Private health insurance continues to be a costly source of frustration for consumers. We propose a Productivity Commission inquiry to investigate the benefit of government involvement in the sector. We need simpler more transparent health insurance that also includes more information about the fees and performance of medical practitioners.

“CHF also proposes a more streamlined medicines co-payment process and the establishment of a national pain strategy.

“And we recommend the Federal Government support a program to ensure health care consumers’ participation in the policy and implementation of health reforms and medical research.

“Evidence from around the world shows that consumer-focused care results in better health outcomes, happier patients and clinical staff, and lower costs. Government support for such developments will make for a healthier Australia,” Ms Wells said.

The CHF Budget submission is at: [\\chf-srv-01\company\Submissions and Projects\Submissions Jul 17 to Jun 18\Budget 2018\CHF Federal Budget Submission 2018-19 .pdf](#)

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