

Developing a consensus statement on healthy eating and active living

VicHealth guide to best practice



There's an urgent need for the government and health organisations to collaborate and turn the tide on childhood obesity. In response, VicHealth convened a roundtable of nine key organisations in 2017 to develop a consensus statement on healthy eating and active living.

The consensus statement, *A healthier start for Victorians* resulted from a streamlined, two-year consensus process, and includes eight practical recommendations to the Victorian Government to prevent obesity.

The consensus process is summarised below to guide best practice for developing consensus on policy priorities.

CONVENE ROUNDTABLE

Convene a roundtable comprising CEO level decision makers of key organisations and agree on a clear purpose and course of action.

Key learning: Although organisations may have different mandates, having consensus on the top actions allows for more purposeful dialogue with government and others.

YEAR 1

Key learning: Involve government policy makers up front and keep them informed throughout the process to capture additional feedback.

ESTABLISH WORKING GROUP

Establish a working group consisting of program managers and researchers to support the process of reviewing evidence and brainstorming ideas for policy options.

YEAR 1

GENERATE POLICY OPTIONS

Coordinate the working group to generate evidence-informed policy options for discussion and feedback by the roundtable.

Key learning: Note that no single organisation's votes formed the outcome – all organisations compromised on their perspectives to achieve consensus.

YEAR 1

"The HEAL working group developed a list of thirty policy options to tackle obesity in Victoria, based on available evidence and national and international publications."

VOTE FOR TOP PRIORITIES

Finalise options and facilitate voting by the roundtable to identify the top priorities based on feasibility and impact.

Key Learning: The need for a coordinator of the HEAL roundtable was vital to ensure information was communicated, meetings scheduled and consensus reached. For this project, VicHealth played this role.

ACHIEVE CONSENSUS

Consensus is achieved when a policy option receives more than half of the roundtable's votes.

YEAR 1

REFINE STATEMENTS

Provide the opportunity to give feedback on the framing of each recommendation.

ENDORSE

All organisations represented on the roundtable endorse the final content of the consensus statement.

YEAR 2

INVITE BROADER ENDORSEMENT

Invite additional external organisations to endorse the consensus statement without significant amendments.

"Using and building on existing relationships from within the HEAL roundtable helped to facilitate an additional 14 organisations endorsing the statement prior to launch."

YEAR 2

PUBLISH

Produce the statement and supporting material using joint branding to ensure shared ownership.

LAUNCH

Provide a briefing to the relevant Minister to launch and handover the body of work to the public domain to guide strategic and consistent advocacy and policy.

YEAR 2

With thanks to HEAL roundtable members:

