

## Media Release

Embargoed 00.01am 13 May 2015

### STATE OF SALT: DEATHS LINKED TO HIGH SALT INTAKE SIX TIMES HIGHER THAN VICTORIA'S ANNUAL ROAD TOLL

With almost six times more Victorians dying as a result of high salt intake than on Victoria's roads, VicHealth is today launching a plan of action to reduce the amount of salt people consume in Victoria.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said Victorians were eating too much salt and putting themselves at risk of high blood pressure which accounts for about half of all strokes, heart disease and chronic kidney disease deaths.

"We're eating more than 15,000 tonnes of salt a year in Victoria – almost twice the upper limit that is recommended. In particular, children, who generally need less salt than adults, are eating far too much salt, and this can lead to a lifetime of health risks.

"Almost one in 20 deaths in Victoria is attributable to high salt intake – that's six times the annual road toll," Ms Rechter added.

[\*The State of Salt: The Case for Salt Reduction in Victoria\*](#), published today, is focused on saving lives by tackling five key areas to reduce Victoria's salt intake.

Jacqui Webster, Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Population Salt Reduction at The George Institute for Global Health said: "Australia has committed to a 30% reduction in salt intake by 2025 as part of the World Health Organization's global targets to prevent and control non-communicable diseases. By reducing the amount of salt Victorians consume by 30% we could save 800 lives each year and \$50 million in healthcare costs."

Ms Rechter said Victoria was leading the way to help Australia meet the WHO's global target.

"To achieve the 30% reduction in salt intake, VicHealth has joined forces with a range of organisations that are working to reduce harm from salt and high blood pressure<sup>1</sup> to launch a plan of action on salt. We'll be working with governments, the food industry, health groups, non-government organisations and the public to increase awareness and strengthen healthy policies.

"We're committed to saving lives through our plan of action to build strong partnerships, increase public awareness and debate, strengthen healthy policies, develop innovative approaches within the food industry and conduct research, monitoring and evaluation to measure progress towards our salt reduction target."

#### Media Contact

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Increasing public awareness that people are eating almost twice the recommended amount of salt is critical to meeting the 30% target.

Ms Rechter said: “Most salt in the Australian diet comes from added salt in processed foods like bread, breakfast cereal, processed meats and ready-made sauces. Shoppers are often unaware how much salt they’re eating which is why this partnership will work to ensure that policies and initiatives that support a healthier food supply are established, resourced and monitored. We will also work with the food industry to find solutions to lowering salt in foods and meals.

“As a community, we must all take responsibility for cutting salt if lives are to be saved. We know that salt reduction strategies are up to 200 times more cost-effective than treatment with hypertension medication and that these programs have worked elsewhere, including in the United Kingdom. VicHealth is proud that Victoria is leading the way in tackling Australia’s high salt intake and we look forward to working with our partners to meet the WHO global target,” Ms Rechter added.

### **THE STATE OF SALT LAUNCH DETAILS**

***The State of Salt: The Case for Salt Reduction in Victoria*** will be formally launched by  
**The Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Government of Victoria** at:

**VicHealth, 15-31 Pelham Street, Carlton, Melbourne at 10am on 13 May 2015.**

The following will be available for interview at **10.45am** following a panel discussion that is scheduled to take place between 10.15am and 10.45am

**Jerril Rechter**, CEO VicHealth; **Jacqui Webster**, Centre Director, WHO Collaborating Centre on Population Salt Reduction at The George Institute for Global Health; **spokespeople from VicHealth’s partners** and a **parent**.

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<sup>i</sup> The George Institute for Global Health, Heart Foundation, Deakin University, Baker IDI, Stroke Foundation, Kidney Healthy Australia and the High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia (HBPRCA)

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## TEN TIPS FOR REDUCING SALT FROM THE DIET

1. Eat more fresh vegetables and fruit which are naturally low in salt.
2. Cut back on salty packaged or processed foods such as potato chips and other salty snack foods, packet soups and sauces, pies, sausage rolls, sausages, pizzas, and ready-made meals.
3. Check food labels or use the [FoodSwitch](#) app to choose lower salt foods. On food labels, look for foods with less than 400mg of sodium per 100g. The best choices are foods with less than 120mg of sodium per 100g.
4. Buy 'reduced-salt' breads and breakfast cereals, or check the food label to find the lower salt option.
5. Cut back on processed meats such as bacon, ham, chorizo, and salami.
6. When cooking, limit salty sauces and condiments such as stock, soy and fish sauce, and table salt. Choose lower salt/sodium varieties if available.
7. Use herbs, garlic, and pepper as seasonings as they are naturally low in salt.
8. Take the salt shaker off the table.
9. Eat takeaway meals and foods only occasionally.
10. Follow the Australian Dietary Guidelines. For more information, see [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au).

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