

Wednesday 27 September 2017

New funding stream to make water drink of choice

Health promotion foundation VicHealth is seeking to give sugary drinks the boot and make water the drink of choice at local sport and recreation venues with \$500,000 in new funding up for grabs.

VicHealth's new [Water in Sport Initiative](#) will fund up to nine local councils to promote healthy drink options and reduce the availability and promotion of sugary drinks like soft drinks and sports drinks in kiosks and cafes at Victorian leisure centres and sports venues.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the new program would focus on children and would be delivered in areas with high rates of sugary drink consumption, obesity and poor dental health.

"Sugary drinks, including sports and energy drinks, are the largest source of added sugars in the Australian diet. A standard 600ml sports drink has a whopping 11 teaspoons of sugar," Ms Rechter said.

"Unfortunately we constantly find a smorgasbord of these drinks at venues where children and families regularly play and watch sport. This sends an unhealthy message to our kids that sport and sugary drinks go hand in hand.

"We know that not all Victorians have the same opportunities to achieve good health – some communities are doing it tougher than others.

"That's why we'll be prioritising working with councils where data shows there are high levels of sugary drink consumption and poor health."

The new Water in Sport funding will be provided to councils to limit or remove sugary drinks and increase the availability, accessibility and promotion of water and healthy drinks.

Ms Rechter said councils wanting to improve access to water and healthy drinks in local sport and recreation facilities in priority areas were encouraged to apply for the grants which opened today.

"We're calling for local councils to join us in the fight against obesity by making the healthy choice the easy choice in council-owned sports venues and leisure centres," Ms Rechter said.

"Limiting the availability of sugary drinks at local sporting venues and facilities, particularly in disadvantaged communities, will go a long way in improving the health of Victorians and encouraging healthy choices.

"Making water the drink of choice, instead of sugary drinks is a significant first step to implementing the [Victorian Government's Healthy Choices policy](#) to improve the supply and promotion of healthy foods and drinks."

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By 2023 VicHealth aims to support 200,000 more Victorians eating a healthier diet and in particular, to see people choosing water and healthy food options over soft drink and takeaway foods.

Applications for the Water in Sport Initiative grants are now open and close on Friday 27 October. For more information and to apply for Water in Sport grant visit <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/waterinsport>

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