

THE STATE OF SALT:

The case for salt reduction in Victoria

PROGRESS REPORT

Australia is committed to meeting the World Health Organization target of 30% reduction in average population salt intake by 2025. To achieve this, coordinated action is needed.

The Victorian Salt Reduction Partnership came together in 2014 to develop an action plan for the state. In May 2015, we launched *The State of Salt: The case for salt reduction in Victoria*. This included a comprehensive set of actions aimed at gaining consensus and commitment for salt reduction action from governments, the public and industry in Victoria.

This progress report outlines the Partnership's achievements since the launch of the initial State of Salt publication. It also looks at the plans for the next two-year implementation phase, which will focus on:

- building consumer awareness and mobilising communities to call for more action
- engaging with food industry to reduce salt in foods, specifically focused on products that contribute to dietary salt.

We recognise the time and commitment needed from a range of players to achieve population change. Our actions align with the Healthy Food Partnership and other initiatives at national and state levels that aim to improve nutrition.

Victorian Salt Reduction Partnership: VicHealth, The George Institute for Global Health, Heart Foundation Victoria, Deakin University's Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition Research, National Stroke Foundation, Kidney Health Australia, the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute and the High Blood Pressure Research Council.

Victorian Health Promotion Foundation
PO Box 154 Carlton South
Victoria 3053 Australia
T +61 3 9667 1333 F +61 3 9667 1375

vichealth@vichealth.vic.gov.au
vichealth.vic.gov.au
twitter.com/vichealth
facebook.com/vichealth

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Action area	What we have achieved May 2015 – May 2017: Planning, partnering and early implementation	What we're planning for the next 2 years June 2017 – June 2019: Focused implementation across a strong partnership
Build strong partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine organisations formed the Victorian Salt Reduction Partnership and met quarterly to guide the program of work. • Partnership events held: State of Salt launch in May 2015, Parliamentary Breakfast in March 2016 and the Salt Reduction Breakfast as part of the World Congress on Public Health in April 2017. Key connections have been made through these events, e.g. a Member of Parliament attending the Parliamentary Breakfast then re-engaged through the World Congress Breakfast, links to companies within the food industry who are leading on salt reduction and willing to share their experience. • Events have engaged a diverse range of participants including state, federal and international government departments, Ministers of Australian and Victorian parliaments, public health and health organisations, research institutions, food industry including representative bodies and individual food companies, Victorian public and media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage additional partners who can influence the salt reduction work. • Participate in the Victorian Healthy Eating Enterprise to connect the increased demand for healthier foods and drinks through adoption of <i>Healthy Choices</i> with food manufacturers to drive reformulation. • Coordinate communication activities between partners for greater collective impact in the public awareness, debate and advocacy activities. • Joint publications and submissions from the Partnership to demonstrate the consensus in Victoria for salt reduction action. • Stakeholder bulletins to keep partners up to date.
Increase public awareness and debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Salt launch in May 2015 received strong media response allowing for a good public profile of the issue with an estimated reach of the message to over 6 million Australians. • Latest research findings released at well-attended Parliamentary Breakfast in March 2016 to raise awareness of high salt intake among Victorian children and adults. The research release received good media coverage. • Don't Trust Your Taste Buds consumer awareness campaign ran May–June 2016 with supporting microsite. Evaluation showed increased awareness and the beginnings of behaviour change, as well as strong results across social media, public relations and paid media. www.donttrustyourtastebuds.com.au 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second phase consumer awareness campaign to be launched August 2017. • Reports on salt levels in key food categories made public August 2017 – June 2018. • Research into salt intakes of Victorian children to be released July 2017. • Research into salt taste preferences in children to be released September/October 2017. • Research into salt knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of Victorian parents to be released December 2017. • Media and event for Salt Awareness Weeks in March 2018 and March 2019. • Salt reduction messages will align with and support the messages in the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
Strengthen healthy policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services has in place the <i>Healthy Choices</i> food and drink classification guide and setting-specific policy guidelines for hospitals and health services, workplaces, sports and recreation centres, and parks. These policies drive demand for healthier food and drinks, including lower salt products. • Partners sit on Healthy Food Partnership working groups for Reformulation, and Communication and education. • VicHealth chaired and partners contributed to a national working group on salt reduction by the Australian Health Policy Collaboration. This work has led to the development of two reports, documenting population salt reduction as a priority policy action area for chronic disease prevention in Australia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for setting of targets for salt levels in all food categories by June 2018 through the Healthy Food Partnership. • Support the Healthy Food Partnership by sharing food industry project learnings and positive food reform case studies. • Increase awareness of <i>Healthy Choices</i> guidelines adoption across settings in Victoria to support food industry reformulation and availability of low salt options.
Develop innovative approaches within the food industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry roundtable held in July 2016 with small-to-medium food businesses focused on reformulation in bread and smallgoods provided key insights to inform subsequent work. • Food companies/retailers who are exemplars in salt reduction activities have been showcased, e.g. Coles supermarkets at the State of Salt launch event in 2015, and Subway at the Salt Breakfast in 2017. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase manufacturers based in Victoria producing healthy foods (with a sodium reformulation focus). • Influence food manufacturers to reduce sodium in processed foods by communicating comparisons within food categories. • Generate program interest and influence food manufacturers by facilitating connections with food service markets through a food industry expo. This may be in conjunction with the 2018 Victorian Food Forum, led by the Department of Health and Human Services. • Promote the Building Healthier Foods Community of Practice and Healthy Eating Advisory Service Food Tracker to food manufacturers looking for reformulation support.
Undertake research, monitoring and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partnership was successful in receiving an NHMRC Partnership grant "<i>Reducing salt consumption in Victoria</i>" to evaluate the whole program of work. • Completed baseline assessment of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours regarding salt intake in adults (n~2400) – results published. Sub-sample n~250 with spot urine for salt intake. • Baseline 24-hr urine collection to measure salt intake and sub-sample with 24-hr diet recalls to assess dietary sources of salt in children (n~600) and adults (n~400) completed. Results formed part of the key data presented at Parliamentary Breakfast. • Baseline data collected on salt knowledge and behaviours in a national sample of adults n~1200 (2016 National Social Survey). • Partnership process evaluation undertaken April 2017. 	<p>June 2017 – June 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-point assessment of Victorian adults' salt-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours (n~2000) March 2018. • Monitor amount of salt in key food categories that contribute significantly to salt intakes in Victoria. <p>June 2018 – June 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up assessment of Victorian adults' salt-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours survey (n~2000) and sub-sample with spot urine sample (n~400) for salt intake. • Follow up assessment of salt intake measured via 24-hr urine collection in children (n~600) and adults (n~400) and sub-sample with 24-hr diet recall to assess dietary sources of salt. • Follow up data collected on salt knowledge and behaviours in national sample of adults n~1200 (2018 National Social Survey).