

Making a Submission of Evidence

Victoria's Citizens' Jury on Obesity brings together a representative group of Victorians to think about the way we eat, and solutions to address obesity. Just like any traditional jury, they will consider, question and discuss evidence from interested parties to elicit a considered, common ground position on what needs to be done.

In our approach, approximately 100 Victorians will meet over two days and view and consider current evidence on obesity, with presentations from 'expert witnesses' from industry, government, education, advocates and community. This allows jurors to understand what conscious and unconscious influences may affect their lives and the lives of their families. It should also explore the incentives and dynamics of the food industry, including how the industry both shapes and responds to consumer demand.

If participants feel that there is something that they are not clear on, or feel that there is a particular gap in the evidence, they can request for this information and the organisers will seek to accommodate this request. This principle of openness to alternative views and the fair presentation of the evidence are fundamental to this approach.

What will the jury focus on?

The topic presented to the Citizens' Jury for deliberation is:

We have an obesity problem. How can we make it easier to eat better?

We acknowledge that overweight and obesity is a sensitive issue and highly complex problem encompassing activity, genetics, income inequality and a range of other factors. In the interests of allowing the jury to sufficiently consider, question and discuss this issue, we have focused specifically on food – recognising the large role it plays in society and psychology, and the range of influences few of us are aware of when it comes to food choices such as social setting, colour and context.

Focusing on food choices provides jurors with necessary parameters with which to consider solutions for overweight and obesity.

Who can make a submission?

Submissions may be made by any interested party. These might include, but are not limited to, food manufacturers and producers, retailers, public health and non-government organisations, community groups, community members, individuals and all levels of government.

All parties with an interest in the issue are able to present their arguments and point of view. The jurors will decide how deeply they want to engage with these materials and will select representatives from these parties to hear further information. VicHealth and the Steering Group will not 'control' the outcomes of the citizens' jury; this is in the hands of everyday Victorians.

What makes a good submission?

It may be useful to consider your own view of the world. What do you believe needs to be done about this issue? How do you view the relationship between food choices, food environments and obesity? What possible solutions exist for government, industry and communities?

The submission of evidence is your opportunity to make your case to the jury.

It can be useful to focus your submission around 5 to 6 key messages along with your supporting evidence, ensuring the information is presented in a manner which is easily understood. Limiting jargon, including graphics, and making content relatable and factual will greatly assist jurors to understand your perspective. There is no standard format or template for a submission.

It is important to remember that jurors have the ability to request clarification, seek further information, and validate facts and evidence.

How can I make a submission?

Submissions may be made in any format – written, visual, audio or video. In making a written submission, we recommend limiting it to between 2 to 5 pages. You will be invited to directly upload your written submission into the jury portal. It is preferred that written submissions be uploaded in Portable Document Format (PDF).

It will not be possible to upload audio and video files directly to the jury portal. Instead, you will be required to provide a URL for where the file is hosted – such as Vimeo or YouTube.

The portal will be available at <http://citizensjury.vichealth.vic.gov.au> from Tuesday, 4 August 2015. Submissions must be made by Tuesday, 25 August 2015. In the event that the online portal is not working, you can email your submission to submissions@newdemocracy.com.au.

It is also important to note the following:

- No profanity will be allowed.
- Be mindful of statements which could be perceived as defamation.
- Submissions made by individuals will have contact phone numbers and identifying address details redacted (obscured). The documents will otherwise be made public in their entirety.
- newDemocracy Foundation will handle all redacting of materials, and where this occurs it will be clearly noted.
- Please note that if a submission contains material which an independent medical/health expert judges as dangerous or life-threatening, or potentially creates a risk to public health, a clear warning will be added by newDemocracy. Its mere presence on a VicHealth-owned website does not confer legitimacy.
- All submissions will be uploaded in chronological order to ensure there is no bias
- All submissions will be available publicly; the jury's deliberations will be confidential.

For more information, please contact:

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