

Tuesday 6 February 2018

## Taking sugary drinks off the menu to fight obesity

Health promotion foundation VicHealth is teaming up with eight local councils to give sugary drinks the flick and promote water as the drink of choice at local sport and recreation centres.

The councils will share in over \$500,000 in funding as part of VicHealth's [Water in Sport Initiative](#) to 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 projects are being delivered in areas with higher rates of sugary drink consumption, obesity or poor dental health.

"We know that too much sugar in our diet contributes to a range of major health issues like obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, tooth decay and stroke," Ms Rechter said.

"The average Australian eats 14 teaspoons of added sugar each day – most of that extra sugar comes from sugary drinks, such as sports and energy drinks. A standard 600ml sports drink contains a whopping 11 teaspoons of sugar.

"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 working with communities where data shows there are higher levels of sugary drink consumption and poor health."

Ms Rechter said the new program would improve access to water and healthy drinks in local sport and recreation facilities in eight council areas across the state.

"We're so pleased to have these councils joining us in the fight against obesity by making the healthy choice the easy choice in council-owned sport 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."

### Media Contact

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Rachel Murphy Senior Media Advisor on 03 9667 1319 /0435 761 732 [rmurphy@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:rmurphy@vichealth.vic.gov.au)

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

The eight funded councils teaming up with VicHealth to tackle sugary drink consumption are:

East Gippsland  
Frankston  
Geelong  
Greater Bendigo  
Greater Shepparton  
Melton  
Northern Grampians  
Yarra Ranges

Local statistics and interview opportunities are available on request.

#### **Media Contact**

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