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Obesity action plan needed to direct new Health Agency



The Obesity Policy Coalition is calling on the Federal Government to develop and implement a 5-year action plan on obesity.

Jane Martin, senior policy adviser for the Obesity Policy Coalition said while the Government has an alcohol strategy and is working on a revised one for tobacco, it has yet to develop a co-ordinated, whole of government action plan for obesity.

"The recommendations of the National Preventative Health Taskforce could provide the backbone for a plan, which could be complemented by the work of the National Preventive Health Agency when it is established in the new year."

"We applaud the Parliament for passing the historic National Preventive Health Agency Bill 2010. The Agency will be vital in providing social marketing, research and evaluation around obesity prevention initiatives; however, to see real social change a comprehensive action plan incorporating legislation and policies addressing environmental drivers of obesity is absolutely critical," she said.

The OPC would like to see the following included in an action plan:

- * Investigations into junk food tax and healthy food subsidies
- * Regulation to restrict marketing junk food to children
- * Better food labelling - including traffic light labelling on food
- * Improving physical environments to encourage people to be active as part of their daily lives.

"We call on the Federal Government to keep up the momentum in the fight against obesity, particularly childhood obesity. More than one-quarter of Australian children and more than 60% of adults are overweight or obese. In order to tackle this problem we require a comprehensive, long-term, planned approach by government," Ms Martin said.

About the Obesity Policy Coalition

The Obesity Policy Coalition is a group of leading public health agencies who are concerned about the escalating levels of overweight and obesity, particularly in children.

The Obesity Policy Coalition partners include Diabetes Australia - Vic, Cancer Council Victoria, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention at Deakin University.

Media release

