

Media Release

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MOMENTUM GROWS FOR A SUGAR TAX IN AUSTRALIA

According to VicHealth, there is a unique opportunity for Australia to consider tax reforms targeting sugary drinks, in light of the United Kingdom's recent decision to tax soft drink manufacturers who put large amounts of sugar in their products.

Announced this week, the UK will impose a levy on drinks with more than 5g of sugar per 100ml, which follows increasing support in Australia for reform to address rising obesity levels.

Victoria's [Citizen's Jury on Obesity](#), an initiative of VicHealth held in late 2015, called for a sugar tax as one of 20 'asks' that could help make it easier for Victorians to choose healthier foods.

The Jury wanted to see an increase of at least 20% on the purchase price of sugar-sweetened beverages to discourage consumption, with the revenue raised from any such food and beverage taxes earmarked to fund new health promotion initiatives.

In addition, a VicHealth-*Herald Sun* reader poll last year found 72% of respondents would support a tax on unhealthy food and drinks if the taxes were used to make healthy foods cheaper.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the UK sugar tax announcement provided a platform for State and Federal Governments to consider what action they can take in future to encourage healthy eating and prevent chronic disease.

"Sugar-sweetened drinks, including sports and energy drinks are the largest source of added sugars in the Australian diet and can lead to tooth decay and being overweight or obese, which increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers," Ms Rechter said.

"We support action that encourages Victorians to choose healthier food and beverages and we welcome the discussion of this issue, which was supported by Victoria's Citizen's Jury on Obesity late last year.

"We will continue to work with government, business, food experts and the community sector to advance food policy, planning, reformulation and regulation."

VicHealth's H30 Challenge encourages Victorians to swap sugary drinks for 30 days and reap the health rewards. For information, or to sign up, visit <http://h30challenge.com.au>

For information on Victoria's Citizen's Jury on Obesity, visit <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/search/victorias-citizens-jury-on-obesity>

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