

Government
of South Australia

2009MHE-02415

Mrs Liz Penfold MP
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Dear Mrs Penfold

Last year you made a submission in response to the discussion paper entitled *Television advertising and the consumption of unhealthy food and drinks by children*. I would like to thank you for your input and advice on this important issue and also provide an update on progress.

Sixty three responses were received from interested individuals, as well as public, private and non-Government organisations. The submissions provided information on a wide range of issues including: child development; the preferred role of Government and industry; options for reform and the connection between advertising and obesity. Some of the responses reflected many hours of work and were most helpful in informing my views about the directions required around this complex issue.

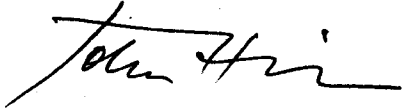
During the course of the consultation, the Australian Food and Grocery Council released its *Responsible Children's Marketing Initiative* designed to encourage members to act responsibly to limit exposure of children to advertising of unhealthy foods and drinks. This has been followed up more recently by a similar model of self-regulation by the Australian Quick Service Restaurant (fast food) Industry.

You may recall that in the consultation paper, I stated this Government's *preference for the advertising and food industries to voluntarily take their own action to restrict advertising of unhealthy food and drinks to children* (page 2). While these moves by industry are, therefore, a step in the right direction, I have some concerns that they do not go far enough. To this end, I have invited industry bodies to meet with me and I hope to encourage them to look at extending the scope of their initiatives. In addition, I have instructed SA Health to monitor the impact of the voluntary codes over the next 12 months and report back to me with their evaluation of progress.

At the time of the consultation, I also stated my preference for *national action* (page 2) ideally led by the Federal Government. I note that the Preventative Health Taskforce's recently released Report recommended action to reduce children's exposure to the advertising of unhealthy foods. Therefore, my proposed 12 month review period will allow time to consider action following the Taskforce's Report and industry discussions to support the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health.

I wish to assure you of my strong commitment to the health and wellbeing of South Australians, particularly our children. Prevention is always better than cure and the complexities associated with obesity prevention need a concerted effort from all of us.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Date: 6 November 2009