

The Parents Jury's response to the AFGC Responsible Marketing to Children Code

The Australian Food and Grocery Council has today proposed a voluntary code on restricting advertising of unhealthy foods to children under 12. The Parents Jury encourages the food industry to adopt a socially responsible approach to the marketing of food and drinks to children. However, the AFGC represents food companies whose business is to profit from the sale of unhealthy foods, and we consider that as an industry body it has a serious conflict of interest in the self regulation of food marketing to children.

The proposed code will only regulate ads shown during programs specifically for children under 12 and will not cover the peak viewing time slot of between 6pm and 9pm when large numbers of children and watching popular programs and many unhealthy foods ads are shown. Fast food giants such as McDonalds, KFC and Hungry Jacks are not members of AFGC and will not be obliged to adopt the new code.

Food industry self regulation of marketing unhealthy foods to children can not be relied on as an appropriate approach. Government regulation is the only effective strategy in protecting children from the potential harm that can result from the current bombardment of unhealthy food advertising on television.

The Parents Jury is calling for:

- Revision of the Children's Television Standards to include a ban on all unhealthy food advertisements on television between 6am and 9pm every day of the week.
- Unhealthy foods to be determined by a nutrient profiling system such as that developed by the Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ).
- Further Government restrictions to control other types of unhealthy food marketing to children including internet sites, in-store and on-pack promotions featuring competitions, premiums and endorsements, cinema advertising, SMS marketing and email marketing.

The Parents Jury

The Parents Jury is a free online forum of over 3,600 parents who collectively advocate for the improvement of children's food and physical activity environments in Australia. The Parents Jury is supported by Cancer Council Australia and its member bodies, Diabetes Australia – Vic, QLD and WA, the Australian and New Zealand Obesity Society, and VicHealth.

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact:

Caitlin Syrett, The Parents Jury Officer - Ph 0423 791 194 or 03 9667 1759

The Parents Jury is supported by:

