

MEDIA RELEASE

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Tighter rules around junk food marketing to children only effective if enforced

Advocacy group, The Parents' Jury, welcomes global commitments from some of the world's largest food and beverage companies to cut junk food marketing to children, but remains wary of the flaws of industry self-regulation.

Dimity Gannon, Campaigns Manager for The Parents' Jury, said: "marketing strongly influences children's food preferences and fuels pester power for parents to buy unhealthy foods. With 1 in 4 Australian children now classified as overweight or obese, restriction of junk food marketing to children is essential."

CEOs of 11 international food and beverage companies, including the likes of Coca Cola, McDonald's, Nestle, PepsiCo, Mars and Kellogg's, say they will eliminate marketing to children under 12 across all advertising mediums by 2016.

"This could be a win for parents and children 'if' commitments to abolish junk food marketing to children are adhered to by the food and beverage industry.

"Too often we have seen junk food marketing to children slip through the cracks of industry self-regulation. Australia has a voluntary code for TV advertising to children, yet time after time junk food advertisements targeting children air during children's TV programming.

"We would like to believe that industry can follow through with these commitments voluntarily this time, but their track record has not been good. Government regulation of junk food marketing to children would be a more effective and immediate step", Ms Gannon said.

The World Health Organisation this month called for governments to play a leading role in reducing children's overall exposure to food marketing by regulating those marketing techniques used by food and beverage companies.

The Parents' Jury is an online network of parents and people who are interested in improving the food and physical activity environments of Australian children. Formed in 2004, The Parents' Jury has thousands of members nationally and provides a forum for parents to voice their views and collectively advocate for change.

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