



**The Hon Brad Hazzard MP**  
Minister for Health  
Minister for Medical Research



Mr David Blunt  
Clerk of the Parliaments  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Your ref D16/40269

Our ref C17/46

Dear Mr Blunt,

**Government response to Report no 51. Childhood Overweight and Obesity**

The NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues conducted an Inquiry into Childhood Obesity in 2016 and issued *Report no 51. Childhood Overweight and Obesity* on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December that year.

In accordance with Standing Order 233(1) please find attached the Government response for tabling in the Legislative Council prior to 15 June 2017.

If you would like more information, please contact Meredith Claremont, Director, Population Health Strategic Programs, Centre for Population Health on 02 9461 7195.

Yours sincerely



**Brad Hazzard MP**

07 JUN 2017

Received by me at 2:15pm  
on Tuesday 13 June 2017  
and authorised to be made  
public.

Staffell  
the Clerk of the  
Parliaments

## DRAFT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

### Recommendation 1

That the NSW Government consider incorporating an audit and compliance process in the revised 2017 Fresh Tastes @ School Healthy Canteen Strategy.

#### Response: Supported

The NSW Department of Education has revised its Healthy School Canteen Strategy in consultation with NSW Health, the non-government school sector, the Secondary Principals Council (SPC), the Primary Principals Association (PPA), canteen operators and parents. In 2016, consultation sessions with key stakeholders were held across the state to inform development of the revised strategy.

On 28 February 2017, the Premier of NSW, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian and the Minister for Education, the Hon Rob Stokes, announced the updated Healthy School Canteen Strategy.

The NSW Government supports implementation of a monitoring and compliance process in the revised Healthy School Canteens Strategy. The department will introduce a monitoring and compliance process as part of the revised strategy. This will be developed in semester 1, 2017 in consultation with the primary and secondary principals' groups.

### Recommendation 2

That the NSW Government re-evaluate, further promote and encourage participation in the NSW Premier's Sporting Challenge to a broader range of schools and students.

#### Response: Supported

The NSW Premier's Sporting Challenge is a multifaceted initiative in which all NSW public schools have the opportunity to participate in some way. The NSW Department of Education reviewed the operations of the Premier's Sporting Challenge in November 2016 and has implemented a variety of changes to encourage more schools to participate across its suite of programs.

A revised communication and promotional strategy has been activated to encourage increased student involvement in the NSW Premier's Primary and Secondary School Sport Challenges. This strategy comprises a simplified registration process, increased online data collection and quicker grant allocations to schools to support more planned physical activity opportunities for students.

New strategies as part of the NSW Premier's Sporting Challenge in 2017 include the offer of a Community of Schools' Grant Program to support Sport Leadership opportunities. In addition, a continuation of the department's commitment to school-based research will be reflected through two studies: Thinking while Moving in English classes (primary schools) and Burn to Learn (fitness and wellbeing focus) for Stage 6 students.

The Challenge also extends to staff. Heightened role modelling by teachers has been fostered by the distribution of wrist pedometers in the Staff Challenge, as teachers participate in the Challenge alongside their students.

### Recommendation 3

That the NSW Government collaborate with secondary schools and non-government organisations to implement programs and initiatives that focus on reducing sedentary behaviour and promoting healthy eating habits to help reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity amongst secondary school students.

#### **Response: Supported**

The NSW Department of Education has established a Physical Activity Working Group including all internal stakeholders who are responsible for supporting school-based initiatives that are aimed at reducing sedentary behaviour and promoting healthy eating habits. This group reviews current operations and investigates possible future opportunities.

The department meets regularly with inter-agency and university representatives, such as representatives from the Healthy Eating Active Living Strategy and from the University of Newcastle. This collaboration aims to increase the department's awareness of, and support for, initiatives aimed at reducing sedentary behaviour and promoting healthy eating habits.

The department is currently a member of the Advisory Group for a research project with the Hunter New England Local Health District known as Physical Activity for Everyone One (PA4EI). This project is investigating the best way to encourage and support whole school change to increase physical activity in the secondary school setting.

The online professional learning course, 'Introducing the NSW Physical Literacy continuum K-10', is available to all NSW Government school teachers and executives. Through this course, participants develop an understanding of physical literacy and its relationship to planned physical activity in schools. They explore how the NSW Physical Literacy continuum K-10 can support teaching and learning at a whole school level, at a classroom level and at an individual student level. The course is free and provides participants with registered hours for teacher accreditation. The online course was launched for teacher access from 1 February 2017 and 30 participants have accessed and completed the course. The course will be extensively promoted through internal communication targeting teachers of PDHPE in both primary and secondary schools.

The Department continues to work closely with NSW Health on identifying interventions that show promise and that the department may be able to trial in secondary schools.

### Recommendation 4

That the NSW Government make available training for primary school teachers in physical education and implement programs to share resources between schools.

#### **Response: Supported**

The NSW Department of Education has a variety of professional learning opportunities for primary school leaders, teachers and staff in physical activity and the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) curriculum including practical workshops, video conferences, online modules and whole school review tools.

The NSW Department of Education is currently involved in a research study called iPLAY led by Professor Chris Lonsdale, Australian Catholic University and Professor David Lubans, University of Newcastle. This study is investigating the impact of professional learning on teacher confidence and competence in the planning and delivery of quality sport and planned physical activity sessions. It adopts a whole-of-school approach with emphasis on strategies to enhance student participation and increased levels of physical activity through the curriculum and in the school environment.

Over 200 primary schools will participate in this research program over the next two years, with plans to offer it to all schools over subsequent years.

### Recommendation 5

That the NSW Government consider pursuing the incorporation of nutrition and cooking within the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education school curriculum.

#### Response: Supported

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) is responsible for developing the curriculum to be taught in NSW schools. The mandatory Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) curriculum currently includes nutrition education for all students from Kindergarten to Year 10. It is taught within the broader context of personal health choices and individual and community health and acknowledges the link between nutrition and healthy lifestyle behaviour.

The current PDHPE curriculum provides a comprehensive approach to nutrition. In K-6, students have the opportunity to learn about food choices for good health, the impact of unhealthy eating on one's health, preparation and storage of food, how to balance energy intake and energy expenditure and the components of a balanced lifestyle. In Years 7-10 students have the opportunity to learn about nutritional requirements throughout life, recommended dietary guidelines for children and young people, sources of nutritional information, factors that influence an individual's food choices, the relationship of food choices to their health, lifestyle diseases as a result of unhealthy food choices, food labels to understand the nutritional value and marketing of food products and the relationship between diet, physical activity and health.

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) is in the process of consulting on a new draft K-10 PDHPE syllabus which includes nutrition. Content relating to nutrition has been strengthened from the current syllabus and includes opportunities for students to undertake cooking as a way to learn about nutrition and health concepts. The following statements are examples of content relating to nutrition and cooking in the new draft K-10 PDHPE syllabus:

- Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) - take action to adopt and promote healthy food choices and sustainable practices at home and at school eg: healthy cooking
- Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10) - explore sources of nutritional information and investigate the contextual factors that influence food choices eg: cooking

Schools have the flexibility to deliver content to the needs of their students and within the resources of their school. Feedback from the consultation of the draft K-10 PDHPE syllabus will be considered for the final syllabus for delivery in NSW schools.

The new draft Technology Mandatory Years 7-8 syllabus is also in the process of consultation. This syllabus provides students with the opportunity to explore content relation to nutrition through the learning context Agriculture and Food Technologies, for example:

- analyse the characteristics of a variety of nutritious foods
- select, justify and use a range of appropriate tools and techniques in the development of a design project and/or food preparation.

Feedback from the consultation of the draft Technology Mandatory Years 7-8 syllabus will be considered for the final syllabus for delivery in NSW schools.

### Recommendation 6

That the NSW Government fund a pilot program, similar to the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program, to target areas with a high prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity.

#### **Response: Supported in principle**

NSW public schools make local decisions about how to best meet the needs of their students, including how to use their budget allocation to meet local needs. School principals are best placed to decide if participation in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program or other similar programs will address the needs of their students.

The NSW Department of Education provides curriculum resources and support materials to assist school communities to establish garden programs and link these to the curriculum including science and technology, PDHPE and the cross-curriculum priority of sustainability.

Grants provided through the NSW Environmental Trust and Live Life Well@ School program have assisted many schools to implement kitchen garden programs. The Trust through the Eco Schools program has provided grants to support a range of environmental initiatives, including many kitchen garden projects.

While it is noted that whole-school approaches are supported by the evidence, there is limited evidence of effectiveness of stand-alone programs.

### Recommendation 7

That the NSW Government investigate the options to reduce the cost of organised sport for children, such as through a voucher system.

#### **Response: Supported**

The NSW Government recognises that the cost of organised sport can be a barrier to participation for children. Experience from within Australia and internationally indicates that participation in sport and recreation by young people has multiple social benefits for the community. The evidence suggests that this participation can minimise the risk factors associated with antisocial behaviour, crime, illicit drug and tobacco use, violence, suicide and teen pregnancy, whilst boosting educational engagement and resilience.

The NSW Office of Sport provides the Local Sports Grants Program which aims to address barriers to participation and assist Incorporated, not-for-profit grassroots sport clubs to provide quality service to their members. The program includes a Sport Access funding stream with grants of up to \$5,000 for eligible projects which include the costs associated with overcoming a barrier to participation in sport, for example, subsidised registration fees for members, uniforms or equipment. Since 2015-16, over \$2 million has been provided for 535 Sport Access projects.

Currently there is no specific voucher scheme to assist with the cost of organised sport for children in NSW. The NSW Government will continue to investigate options to reduce the cost of organised sport for children, including through a voucher system.

There may also be opportunities to fund a sporting voucher system through the proposed framework that is currently being explored to enable the NSW Government to enter into partnership arrangements with non-government organisations and the private sector (see Recommendation 16).

### Recommendation 8

That pre-conception, pregnancy and early life stages are better incorporated in programs that aim to address childhood overweight and obesity.

#### **Response: Supported**

The NSW Government recognises that pre-conception, pregnancy and early life stages of a child are important stages of child development, when conditions and habits that contribute to childhood overweight and obesity are formed.

For women, aged 16-40 years, maintaining a healthy weight, eating well and being physically active are all important for conception and a successful pregnancy and birth. NSW women (16 years and over) have access to a free telephone coaching service (Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service) to assist them to achieve healthy weight goals, improve physical activity and nutrition, or reduce alcohol consumption. Coaching involves 10 free coaching calls from a University qualified coach over a six month period. On average, participants who complete the coaching lose 4kg of weight, and 5cm from their waist circumference.

For working women in NSW with an employer who has registered for the Get Healthy at Work program, a workplace chronic disease prevention program may be available. Get Healthy at Work involves an individual Brief Health Check, and the employer is expected to implement a workplace health program. If an individual is considered at risk of diabetes or cardiovascular disease they are referred to the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service, or Quitline if they are a smoker.

For pregnant women, the Get Healthy in Pregnancy program is available. This is a modified version of the Get Healthy Coaching Service which aims to support women to achieve healthy gestational weight gain. It contains specific information relevant to women during pregnancy, plus two phone calls after the birth to support breastfeeding.

For parents of children aged 0-2 years, early childhood nurses in NSW local health districts provide routine services which include breastfeeding support programs, routine child growth assessment, and advice to support healthy nutrition and active play.

For more disadvantaged or developmentally vulnerable families, a sustained nurse home visiting program has shown that providing mothers with evidence-based advice and recommendations can improve maternal knowledge and practice regarding obesity prevention and reduce body mass index (BMI) in the first few years of life. This NSW program is currently integrating evidence-based age-appropriate healthy eating and active play components into the program.

The Sydney Local Health District is conducting a trial to determine the efficacy of communicating healthy eating and active play advice by telephone (CHAT) to mothers with infants is underway. The trial aims to prevent the development of overweight and obesity by age 2 years. If successful, this service is designed to integrate with existing early childhood nursing practice. South Eastern Sydney, South Western Sydney and Murrumbidgee Local Health Districts are also participating.

The *Munch & Move* program targets children aged 0-5 years in early childhood education and care services (preschool, long day care and family day care). The program promotes physical activity including fundamental movement skill development, healthy eating and reduced small screen time. Rural and regional services participate in the program to at least the same extent as metropolitan services, with high program reach and impact in these locations. Fact sheets and brochures (including *Starting Family Foods*) are available for educator to share with families. The program has

been available since 2008 and as of 31 December 2016 over 91% of centre-based services across NSW have participated in training.

### Recommendation 9

That the NSW Government continue to implement and promote family orientated programs, such as Making Healthy Normal and Go4Fun, to assist in reducing childhood overweight and obesity.

#### **Response: Supported**

The NSW Government recognises the importance of family oriented programs and social marketing campaigns to contribute to the reduction in childhood overweight and obesity.

The Make Healthy Normal campaign highlights overweight and obesity as a public health issue and motivates people to reassess their lifestyle choices to create a new, healthy normal. It does this by challenging current perceptions of unhealthy behaviour that is now considered 'normal'. In 2017, the Make Healthy Normal campaign will target parents and carers of children aged five to twelve years to support the Premier's Priority to reduce childhood overweight and obesity. People living in regional, rural and remote locations in NSW will also be targeted.

The campaign will run across television, radio, print, out of home and digital channels. This mass media activity is supported by a broader communications strategy which includes a website, social media and community engagement activities. Community engagement activities will be held in metro, regional and rural locations across NSW. There are also a number of stakeholder engagement activities and partnerships across government agencies, including Service NSW and Sydney Water, and non-government organisations such as the National Heart Foundation (NSW Branch) to support the campaign.

The Go4Fun program is an evidenced-based healthy lifestyle program for families with children that promotes healthy eating and physical activity amongst children aged 7 to 13 years who are above a healthy weight. The program has been designed to achieve long term behaviour change for the whole family and includes practical education in nutrition and diet alongside physical activity and behaviour change strategies.

Since June 2011, 890 programs have been delivered with 8,763 children and their families enrolling into a Go4Fun program. On average child participants who have completed the program have reduced their BMI by 0.5kg/m<sup>2</sup>, reduced their waist circumference by 1.3cm, increased their physical activity by 3.6 hours per week and decreased their sedentary activity by 3.1 hours per week.

Go4Fun has commenced developing a non face-to-face delivery option for families who are unable to access the face-to-face version of the program, this will specifically provide improved access for rural and regional families seeking to participate in Go4Fun. The model includes a combination of online, SMS and phone delivery modes. The Go4Fun program has also been culturally adapted for delivery with Aboriginal communities in NSW and is currently being piloted throughout NSW including in rural and remote communities.

For all children and families who come into contact with NSW Health services, routine child growth assessment will become mandatory from July 2017. A service measure to monitor the level of measurement of children's height and weight across inpatient, outpatient and community settings will support performance monitoring and will allow children who are above a healthy weight to be routinely identified. Once children are identified as above a healthy weight, the parents and carers will be informed, and supported with family-oriented brief advice, management or referral as appropriate. The brief advice focuses on the home environment, including active play, sleep time, screen time, age-appropriate portion sizes, healthy snacks, and eating breakfast every day. NSW Health is currently examining the models of care for weight management services when management cannot be successfully performed within primary care. These secondary and tertiary

care services will also have a family-centred approach, and include dietician led services, as well as some multidisciplinary clinic models.

NSW Health recognises the need for programmes to be inclusive of children who have additional vulnerability or barriers to accessing mainstream programs, including children with disability. For example, Go4Fun is accessible to families with mild disabilities e.g. Asperger's Syndrome and programs are tailored by Local Health Districts as required.

### Recommendation 10

That the Department of Planning and Environment improve opportunities for cross-agency collaboration and contribution to urban planning process, particularly giving consideration to health objectives.

#### Response: Supported

The Department of Planning & Environment is working with agencies to roll out nine regional plans to deliver for the first time strategic land use plans across all of NSW. Each regional plan sets out a 20-year vision for the region, with actions to deliver the vision. The regional plans set out directions to promote strong, connected and healthy communities. Creating liveable places will become increasingly important due to future demographic changes.

The regional plans contain an action to develop urban design guidelines for healthy built environments. Furthermore, the six draft district plans released by the Greater Sydney Commission also contain an action to develop guidelines for a safe and healthy built environment.

The guidelines will help councils when they are preparing plans for new release areas and urban renewal of existing areas, to create built environments which help people live healthy lives.

The Department of Planning & Environment is working with the NSW Ministry of Health and the Greater Sydney Commission to develop the guidelines. The Office of Sport will provide advice in regard to physical activity, sport and active recreation matters to help inform where relevant the regional plans and urban design guidelines. The NSW Healthy Planning Expert Working Group will also be involved to ensure alignment across key stakeholders.

The guidelines will draw upon a significant body of related work already undertaken by other NSW Government agencies, including the "Healthy Urban Development Checklist" (2009) prepared by NSW Health, and "Addressing active living and healthy eating through local councils' Integrated Planning and Reporting framework" prepared by the then Premier's Council for Active Living in 2016.

The guidelines will also draw upon and localise content in "Healthy Spaces & Places: A national guide to designing places for healthy living", which was jointly prepared in 2009 by the Australian Local Government Association, the National Heart Foundation of Australia and the Planning Institute of Australia.

### Recommendation 11

That the NSW Government continue its work in the area of active travel to school to reduce childhood overweight and obesity.

#### Response: Supported

The NSW Government is committed to supporting safe active travel to school, and to encouraging communities to work together to facilitate active travel.



In 2014 the NSW Government (including the Department of Education, Ministry of Health and Transport for NSW) and non-government organisations (including the NSW Heart Foundation, Bicycle NSW, the Walking Volunteers) launched the NSW Active Travel Charter for Children. This document highlighted the benefits of active travel for children, and listed a range of strategies that would encourage children's active travel.

To support the Charter, and to promote active travel among primary school aged children, a set of resources was produced and is available from the Healthy Kids website. These include background material for parents/carers, an action plan template, and recommended strategies to promote active travel.

As part of the NSW Live Life Well at School program (a partnership between the Ministry of Health and the Department of Education) Local Health Districts support primary schools in achieving a limited number of 'desirable practices' which reflect good organisational or settings practices associated with healthy outcomes. From July 2017 a new set of revised practices will include one practice focused on the promotion of active travel.

Further age-appropriate resources for high school aged children have been developed, and are being pilot-tested in 2017 in six high schools in three Local Health Districts. These resources are also available from the Healthy Kids website.

Transport for NSW has leadership of the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* to guide the NSW Government's transport funding priorities over the next 20 years by providing an overall framework to deliver an integrated transport planning process.

*Sydney's Walking Future*, *Sydney's Cycling Future* and 10 *Regional Transport Plans* are strategies that complement the Master Plan. These strategies seek to improve the walking and cycling networks across NSW and to make sure the needs of pedestrians and bicycle riders are incorporated into the planning of new transport and infrastructure projects.

TfNSW and Roads and Maritime Services also work with local councils across NSW to deliver significant improvements to walking and cycling networks in local communities each year.

The 2016-17 Budget includes a commitment of \$284 million over the next four years for walking and cycling infrastructure. This includes \$59 million in 2016-17 for more than 300 projects across the State; an additional \$145 million for active transport projects over the forward estimates; and an \$80 million reservation in Restart NSW for cycling infrastructure.

TfNSW administers the student Opal card for students to travel to and from school as well as the child/youth Opal card. Studies have shown that the incidental exercise children get walking to and from public transport significantly contributes to their daily physical activity needs.

The NSW Government, through the Centre for Road Safety and in partnership with the education sectors, funds the NSW road safety education program in schools - Safety Town and On the Move. The Safety Town program is an integrated road safety educational resource for NSW students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Safety Town is a suite of digital and non-digital teaching and learning activities which builds on students' prior learning, skills, knowledge and understanding of safe travel covering pedestrian safety, passenger safety and safety on wheels (bicycles, foot scooters, skateboards and rollerblades). On the Move has road safety material for teachers to complement the Years 7-10 PDHPE, Student Wellbeing and Senior English programs. The resources help students identify and reduce road safety risks, and encourage them to become safer pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders and drivers.

TfNSW and RMS work with councils and community groups to deliver NSW Bike Week events across NSW. NSW Bike Week is timed to coincide with the last week of school's third term in order to create bicycle safety awareness for children prior to the school holiday period. A key objective of NSW Bike Week is to provide a safe environment to encourage new and less confident bicycle riders to improve their cycling skills. In 2016, over 80 events were held state-wide. A wide range of cycling events including local school family fun rides were staged with children of an early age encouraged to participate.

TfNSW actively works to promote healthy wellbeing through its membership of the Western Sydney Diabetes Alliance, working directly with the Office of Preventive Health and the Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Senior Officers Group. TfNSW has recently provided walking and cycling time spent statistical information to NSW Health to support the key measures outlined in the HEAL strategy report.

### Recommendation 12

That the NSW Government consider options to enable shared sports facilities, or increased opportunities for sharing of existing sports facilities, between state and local governments, schools and sporting organisations.

#### Response: Supported

The Greater Sydney Commission has released six draft District Plans. The goal of these Plans is to have well-coordinated, integrated and effective planning for land use, transport and infrastructure.

The draft District Plans set out the opportunities, priorities and actions and provide the means by which the Greater Sydney Region Plan, *A Plan for Growing Sydney* can be put into action at a local level. The draft District Plans have two actions consistent with Recommendation 12:

- Liveability Action 14 in the draft District Plans establishes the Office of Sport as the lead agency in working with councils to develop a sport and recreation participation strategy and sport and recreation facility plan.
- Liveability Action 15 provides for the Greater Sydney Commission and Department of Education to support planning for shared spaces, including shared use of community and school facilities.

The NSW Department of Education encourages members of the community and education groups to use school facilities when they are not being used for teaching and learning.

Through the Department's Community Use of School Facilities policy, schools are able to partner with local councils and other organisations so facilities such as school playing fields can be shared with the community. School principals are delegated to negotiate terms and make decisions about sharing school facilities with the local community.

A number of local agreements between schools and local organisations to share sporting facilities are already in place. Examples of shared sports facilities as at 28 February 2017 include:

- synthetic sports fields, tennis courts and indoor sports centre at Narrabeen Sports High School shared under a joint venture between the Department, Pittwater Council and NSW Academy of Sports

- synthetic hockey pitch and soccer fields at Ku-ring-gai High School's shared with local organisations
- joint venture between the department and Ballina Council for a regional indoor sports centre and the use of two sporting fields at Ballina High School.

The Office of Sport's Future Needs of Sport Infrastructure Study aims to identify the facility priorities of State sporting organisations and local Councils. These priorities may include the sharing of facilities or better access to facilities.

### Recommendation 13

That the NSW Government oppose any suggestions for bans on donations from restaurant chains and food or beverage producers to sporting clubs or organisations.

#### Response: Noted

The NSW Government does not have any current plans to ban donations from restaurant chains and food or beverage producers to sporting clubs or organisations.

The NSW Government shares concerns about children's and families' decisions about food being influenced by sponsors' unhealthy products. There is some evidence to suggest that sponsorship by food and beverage companies of community sporting organisations results in high recall and positive association by children of these brands. The NSW Government also notes the potential impact on local sporting clubs and organisations of withdrawing this type of income without an alternative source as outlined to the Inquiry by some sporting organisations.

NSW Health and the Office of Sport will continue to monitor the evidence on the relationship between donations and sponsorship and children's nutrition, participation in physical activity and potential contribution to reducing childhood overweight and obesity.

### Recommendation 14

That the NSW Government, through the Council of Australian Governments forum, seek to improve the food labelling systems in Australia.

#### Response: Supported in principle

NSW will continue to actively pursue improvements in food labelling systems in Australia through the appropriate national mechanisms.

The Ministry of Health will continue to work with the NSW Food Authority to support the on-going implementation of kilojoule menu labelling in major fast food outlets and cafes in NSW. NSW was the first jurisdiction to implement menu labelling in Australia. The initiative includes the 8700 campaign and has resulted in an improved understanding of average daily kilojoule requirements and a reduction in median kilojoules purchased.

Food labelling in Australia and New Zealand falls under the joint food regulation system overseen by the Australia New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation (Forum) which consists of health and agriculture ministers from the states and territories. NSW, as part of the Forum, was an active participant in the development of the national front-of-pack labelling system, the Health Star Rating System, which has been shown to positively influence food choices. NSW will continue to support future labelling initiatives that assist people to make healthier food and drink choices. These will include recommendations on improvements to food labelling made in the 2011 Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy (the Labelling Logic review).

### Recommendation 15

That the NSW Government further investigate the healthy 'food desert' concept and give consideration to mapping food deserts across New South Wales to better inform how to address the issue.

#### **Response: Supported**

The NSW Ministry of Health will review the evidence on 'food deserts' and consider the applicability in the NSW context.

This information will be used to inform the suite of programs and strategies outlined in the *NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy* and the *Childhood Overweight and Obesity Premier's Priority Delivery Plan*.

### Recommendation 16

That the NSW Government, particularly the NSW Ministry of Health as the lead agency, continue to seek to collaborate with non-government organisations and private sector partners in approaches to support the Premier's priority to reduce childhood overweight and obesity.

#### **Response: Supported**

Childhood overweight and obesity is a complex multifaceted problem which requires a societal response. Addressing childhood overweight and obesity will have multiple societal benefits, not limited to health alone. The problem cannot be fixed by government alone. Partnerships with non-government organisations and private sector partners will broaden the reach of initiatives that promote and support access to healthier choices for children and their families. Partnerships have the potential to drive collaboration for real change, deepening long term impact by unlocking social and private sector investment to deliver outcomes that promote and support healthy eating and physical activity.

The Ministry of Health, with the Department of Premier and Cabinet, is currently exploring options to facilitate partnership arrangements between the Government, non-government organisations and the private sector. Partnerships will need to adhere to an ethical framework that complies with public sector accountability and transparency requirements. Arrangements will need to be in the public interest and minimise any risks or conflicts of interest, either real or perceived. There is opportunity to prioritise partnerships that include a focus on low socio-economic, regional or rural communities.

The scoping phase has included a review of relevant, current government policies and frameworks; assessment of similar local, national and international partnership models and extensive consultation with key stakeholders. An options paper will be submitted to the NSW Government outlining a preferred framework for partnerships to support the Premier's priority to reduce childhood overweight and obesity.