

Submission to the Health Select Committee on the Public Health Bill

1. This submission has been prepared by Jean Silver, 44 Belle Vue Ave., Northcote Point, North Shore City.
2. I do not wish to appear before the committee to speak to this submission.
3. I represent the North Shore Branch of the New Zealand Federation of Graduate Women (NZFGW). In preparing this submission we have consulted with five members who are well versed in the area of nutrition as they have been trained in Home Science and have been involved in nutrition education in their professional lives.
4. The recommendations below are in addition to those made in our 2006 submission to the Health Select committee supporting the Government's Inquiry into Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes in New Zealand.

5. Submission

We support the intention of the Public Health Bill to reduce obesity which is the biggest risk factor for conditions such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

We support the strengthening of the regulation-making powers in the Bill in order to reduce risk factors as we believe that self-regulation is not bringing about sufficient change to combat the obesity crisis.

We believe that an environment needs to be created in which it is easy to make healthy eating and lifestyle choices. Until it becomes unfashionable to eat unhealthy foods and fashionable to eat healthy foods, voluntary compliance will not be sufficient.

We believe that education not regulation is the key to achieve a healthy environment.

6. Recommendations

We recommend that to help reduce the level of obesity in New Zealand:-

- GST be removed on fruit, vegetables (refer Australia) and all milk;
- GST be increased on drinks with high sugar content;
- More dieticians and nutritionists be trained and employed to address the needs of Maori, Pacific Islanders and people with diabetes;
- ERO officers be required to undertake a review of Health and Physical Education programmes at early childhood centres, primary and secondary schools to ensure that food, nutrition and exercise education are effectively presented in the core curriculum;
- The Tertiary Education Commission require all teacher training institutions to include significant food and nutrition education so that students have realistic practical experiences to learn skills of selecting, storing, preparing, cooking and serving food to help equip them to lead a healthy life style;

- Regulations be introduced to ensure that unhealthy foods and drinks high in fats, salt and sugar are removed from all school food outlets during 2008;
- Regulations be developed to prevent junk food and fizzy drink advertising on television, particularly during times when children's programmes are being screened;
- Schools be encouraged to establish vegetable gardens as part of the nation-wide EnviroSchool programme involving children, teachers and parents;
- Current research and information on the nutritional content of junk food i.e. salt, fats, sugars, be widely publicised in the media;
- Television be encouraged to present programmes which raise awareness about healthy lifestyles e.g. Robert Winstone BBC programme on family eating.