



Press Release

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Children likely watch TV outside Programme Zone

The Obesity Action Coalition believes that the new voluntary code announced today by Minister's Hodgson and Maharey doesn't go far enough and is likely to have no effect at all on the food advertising that children actually see on TV.

Leigh Sturgiss, Executive Director of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) said, "The Broadcaster's Council is introducing a "Getting it Right" guide to children's television advertising, this includes a children's food rating. Only products that receive this rating will be allowed to shown in programmes directed at kids. Sounds great, except the designated children's programmes zones don't in anyway actually reflect when children are actually watching TV".

"According to research carried out in 2005 by the Broadcaster's Council, real world peak viewing time for children aged 5 – 13 is from 6.30pm – 8.45pm on weekdays and from 6.30pm – 9.00pm on weekends. The zones suggested in the new code finish at 5.30pm during the week on TV One and 4.30pm on TV3", Leigh Sturgiss said.

"This voluntary code only looks at television advertising, TV is just one way kids get marketing messages. Websites, print media, cell phone texts, sponsorship branding and even curriculum materials in schools are other ways food manufactures reach and influence children," said Leigh Sturgiss

The Obesity Action Coalition would like to see substantial restrictions on how unhealthy foods are marketed and promoted, especially to children.

"We don't want a total ban on food advertising – as it can also be used to promote healthy food," says Ms Sturgiss. "If advertising were only used to promote healthy food it could help prevent obesity, many obesity-related diseases like diabetes and some cancers, and ultimately provide savings to tax-payer funded health services."

ENDS

For more information and comment contact

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The Obesity Action Coalition represents more than 70 organisations focused on health, nutrition and physical activity as well as Māori and Pacific health groups all interested in addressing the growing problem of obesity and its related health issues.

Its role is to advocate for a wide range of initiatives including government policy, regulations and legislation that will positively influence obesity rates.

OAC is funded by the Ministry of Health and its not-for-profit member organisations. OAC does not receive money from the food industry.