



**REDUCING MAORI OBESITY MUST BE PRIORITY**  
**- OBESITY ACTION COALITION**  
**18 October 2007**

Obesity Action Coalition Director Leigh Sturgiss says reducing the alarmingly high obesity rates of Māori must be a priority as New Zealand seeks ways to address the obesity epidemic.

Speaking from the National Māori Nutrition and Physical Activity hui at Turangawaewae Marae, Ms Sturgiss said OAC strongly supported a by-Māori for-Māori approach to the issue.

“OAC’s Māori Strategic Advocacy Plan has been developed by Te Hotu Manawa Māori, an organisation expert in the area of Māori health and nutrition. Out of this plan has come the food security kit, which will be launched at the hui.”

She said food security was about ensuring people had regular access to healthy food, and improving food security was an important step in reducing Māori obesity rates.

“Māori need enough income to be able to afford healthy food and live a healthy lifestyle. There are a number of steps that could be taken to help this to happen. For example, we could look at reducing the cost of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk product by removing the GST paid on them.

“I look forward to these, and other measures, being debated at the hui.”

The hui is being held in Ngaruawahia from 17 to 19 October.

**For further information:**

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