

21 March 2018

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RACP position statement and evidence review on obesity

Dear Harriet

Thank you for inviting the New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) to provide feedback on the RACP position statement and evidence review on obesity. The NZMA is New Zealand's largest medical organisation, with more than 5,000 members from all areas of medicine. The NZMA aims to provide leadership of the medical profession, and to promote professional unity and values, and the health of all New Zealanders.

We congratulate the RACP on the development of these publications. We strongly agree that cross-sectoral actions are needed to address the systemic drivers of obesity, and we welcome the broad suite of recommendations that are proposed in the draft position statement. We note that these include restrictions on the marketing of unhealthy foods to children, a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages, improved and mandatory labelling of nutritional information, healthy food and drink policies, and consideration of health in decisions on transport and urban planning. We also welcome calls for treatment services to focus on helping people with obesity achieve optimal health at any weight, and ensure steps to reduce weight bias.

The recommendations in the RACP position statement are in close alignment with those in the NZMA's policy briefing on tackling obesity.¹ While the RACP evidence review refers to the NZMA policy briefing in the section on a sugary drinks tax on page 40, given the broad alignment across many areas in both statements, we suggest the RACP consider referencing the NZMA policy briefing earlier in its evidence review, perhaps after the sentence on the role for

¹ NZMA. Tackling Obesity: Policy Briefing. May 2014. Available from https://www.nzma.org.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/32082/NZMA-Policy-Briefing-2014_Tackling-Obesity.pdf

health professional organisations in the prevention and reduction of obesity on page 2. We also suggest that reference number 233 in relation to the NZMA's support for a sugary drinks tax be changed to the NZMA position statement on sugar-sweetened beverages² which was published subsequent to our policy briefing on tackling obesity.

We look forward to seeing the finalised statement.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Baddock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Dr Kate Baddock
NZMA Chair

² NZMA. Taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages. Position Statement. December 2016. Available from https://www.nzma.org.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/52547/Taxes-on-Sugar-Sweetened-Beverages_December-2016.pdf