

Codes Review Panel
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**Submission to the Advertising Standards Authority
By Professor Elaine Rush, MNZM
New Zealand Council Member World Obesity Federation
and the Asia Oceanic Society for the study of Obesity.**

Review of the Code for Advertising to Children and the Children's Code for Advertising Food

This submission may be made public

Thank you for this opportunity. As I am involved in other groups such as the child well being network the arguments are well made and supported by evidence in their submissions which I support. I therefore provide some over riding facts below.

New Zealand is soaking in commercialization and a drive for sales. It is essential for health that any education is backed by supportive environments including access to nutritionally adequate food.

Obesity is a form of malnutrition – while a larger than “normal” body size may indicate excess body fat and calories in the diet (obesity) it does not mean that a person is well nourished.

The impact is intergenerational ~ 10% of pregnant women in NZ are diagnosed with gestational diabetes. The child's life starts within the mother so it is essential she and her family are protected also. The actions of today affect our grandchildren tomorrow.

Advertising/marketing is insidious and takes many forms – not just in the immediate environment of schools but on the back and sides of buses (next page), huge billboards in public places and the omnipresent branding with associated effects. It is a multidimensional form of communication and therefore promotes learned behaviours.

Foods should not be advertised unless they meet a certain standard of nutritional quality e.g. three health stars or more and use of the health star rating should be encouraged.

Finally Project Energize and Under 5 Energize which have been in the primary schools and early child hood centres of Waikato region for 11 and 3 years respectively and provide evidence that support of children and supportive environments within education settings does make a difference to prevalence of obesity and also dental decay– but one of the huge challenges is the countercurrent of advertising pressure in other dimensions of community life: premium offers, discounted pricing, promotional characters, the theme of taste, and the emotional appeal of fun, sports sponsorships, and associations with sport. This is more evident in more deprived areas of New Zealand where the prevalence of obesity is highest.

An essential part of meeting the goal to reduce childhood obesity, improve nutrition, provide supportive environments and reduce inequity

Yours faithfully

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Example. Bus advertising – with financial interest of bus company

