



Public Health Association  
of New Zealand Inc.

**PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION 'SCEPTICAL' ABOUT TV FOOD  
ADVERTISING PLAN  
3 May 2007**

The Public Health Association (PHA) is sceptical about changes to TV food advertising announced today. The Government and major television broadcasters have agreed on a five-point plan aimed at improved food advertising to children.

Director Gay Keating says voluntary agreements between advertisers or broadcasters, and the Government, are usually attempts by industry to delay the introduction of regulations.

"Voluntary agreements on advertising between the tobacco industry and the Government didn't work and had to be replaced with regulations; and the voluntary code on the advertising of alcohol is widely regarded as a joke in public health circles.

"Against this background, it is difficult to welcome another voluntary code; this one aimed at helping parents and children make better food choices."

She says the fact the agreement only affects television advertising is a warning sign.

"What about sponsorship, sales promotions, mail drops, retail displays and all the other advertising activities that draw attention to unhealthy foods?"

"The obesity epidemic needs swift, decisive action. The problem with voluntary agreements is they take time to get embedded and then there is another delay before they can be evaluated. This allows advertisers more time in a liberal advertising environment.

"The Government needs to put in place independent monitoring of the impact of the plan and be prepared to act quickly if it is ineffective."

**For further information**

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***The Public Health Association of New Zealand is a non-party political voluntary association, which provides a major forum for the exchange of information and stimulation of debate about public health in New Zealand.***