



**GOVERNMENT OBESITY RESPONSE WON'T HELP MOST AT RISK**  
**Public Health Association, 27 November 07**

Public Health Association (PHA) Director Dr Gay Keating says the Government's response to the Health Select Committee Inquiry into Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes will do little to help those most at risk.

"People on lower incomes and Maori and Pacific people are more likely to be overweight or obese.

"It's often difficult for people on low incomes to afford healthy food. The link between this "food poverty" and obesity is one of the major reasons that 2003 figures from the Ministry of Health show that 60 percent of Maori women and 76 percent of Pacific women are either overweight or obese.

"These are the groups that are at greatest risk of obesity-related cancer or chronic illness, but there seems to be little for them in the Government's announcement today."

Dr Keating says evidence from other programmes, such as tobacco control, shows that environment changes, such as controlling advertising, make the biggest changes for those people most at risk.

"We live in an 'obesogenic' environment – in which healthy food is out of the reach of many low income families and in which children are constantly bombarded with ads for high-sugar, high-fat foods.

"These are the things we need to address if we are to protect against obesity, type 2 diabetes, obesity-related illnesses and early death. The Government's acceptance of recommendations for establishment of a cross-ministerial committee, to invest in the workforce and to set targets is welcomed, but without stronger measures will not help reduce inequalities."

**For further information:**

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