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PHA calls for relief from rising food prices

The Public Health Association is calling on the Government to remove the GST from nutritious basics such as fruit and vegetables.

PHA national executive officer Dr Gay Keating, says the reduction in the Government's coffers from removing tax from healthy foods would be more than made up by the savings in health expenditure in years to come.

"We have the twin epidemics of obesity and type 2 diabetes threatening to overwhelm the health system a few years down track. We must find a way to encourage shoppers to purchase nourishing food that isn't loaded with sugar, fat and salt. Making healthy products "cost-attractive" would be a huge step in the right direction.

"Faced with a bottle of coke that is much cheaper than an equivalent-sized bottle of milk, it is not surprising that parents choose the unhealthy option.

"Now food prices are skyrocketing and we need the Government to intervene more than ever," says Dr Keating. "It's not just people on a low incomes who are struggling to feed their families nutritiously – middle income earners, particularly people with a mortgage, are now also straining to put good food on the table."

Dr Keating says the PHA has been campaigning for some time for Government to remove the GST from healthy food, to encourage people to buy it.

"But it's almost a matter of survival now with the price of even the basics soaring way past what people can comfortably afford.

"If ever there was a time for the Government to move swiftly, this is it."

For more information contact
Dr Gay Keating
National Executive Officer
Public Health Association
027 341 4708