

Public Health Association Media release
Thursday 20 May

PHA calls on government to remove GST from healthy food

The Public Health Association (PHA) is calling on the government to remove the Goods and Services Tax, increased to 15 percent in today's budget, from nutritious food.

National Executive Officer Dr Gay Keating said the PHA is hugely pleased that reductions in income tax and benefit changes will compensate families for the increase in GST to 15 percent.

"But if the government really wants to make our tax dollars work smarter, it will keep people healthier. It knows that increasing tobacco tax encourages people to make the healthy choice and stop smoking. In the same way, removing GST from wholesome food will help people make healthier choices in what they eat.

"Unfortunately, the budget doesn't do much for families who cannot afford nutritious food."

Dr Keating said that in years to come, New Zealand taxpayers will be supporting the health needs of those, identified by Ministry of Health reports, who cannot afford enough nutritious food today to sustain basic good health into the future, and that this was particularly so for Māori and Pacific families.

"Just this time last year the World Health Organization urged all countries to make sure everyone has access to food and other goods essential to health and wellbeing. Removing GST on nutritious food would help us do just that."

Dr Keating said recent research from the University of Auckland presents a compelling case for the removal of GST from nutritious food.

"The research found that while providing nutritional information has no impact on healthy choices, the removal of GST increased the purchase of healthy food by 11 percent."

The PHA is urging all Members of Parliament to send Māori Party MP Rahui Katene's Members Bill to remove GST from healthy food to Select Committee when it gets its first reading in July.

For more information contact:

Dr Gay Keating, National Executive Officer, PHA
04 474 3060 | 0273 414 708

The research:

- [University of Auckland announcement](#)
- [Findings published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.](#)