

Theme: Removing fast food sponsorship from all sport in Western Australia.

Important note: The information set out below is a snapshot of the evidence to guide collaborative and cohesive discussions at the Obesity Advocacy Target Food Focus forum 2019. It is not intended to be a comprehensive and/or exhaustive review of the all the available evidence related to the topic.

Why are we worried?

- Millions of people are exposed to advertisements for unhealthy foods.
 - Of food and beverage sponsors for junior sport development programs in Australia, **91% were classed as unhealthy.**ⁱ
 - **Over three-quarters of children aged 5-12** were able to **match an unhealthy sponsor with the relevant sport.**ⁱⁱ
- Sponsorship of peak sporting organisations in WA is widespread: it consists of a relatively high proportion of alcohol manufacturers and food companies.
- **50% of Western Australian adults** think that it is inappropriate to promote unhealthy foods at community events.ⁱⁱⁱ

Areas for Consideration

Regulation

- There is **no regulation** of sponsorship as a form of advertisement.
 - Sport sponsorship is not classified as a form of advertising under any broadcast codes of practice.
 - Current industry codes of practice are voluntary and self-regulatory.

The impact on children

- Children are particularly susceptible to sports sponsorship as a form of marketing:
 - 68% of children surveyed could recall sponsors of their sports clubs, and perceived these sponsors to be “cool”.^{iv}
 - Many children had received a voucher or certificate from a food (86%) or beverage (76%) company to reward sports performance.
 - Around one third of children reported liking companies more after receiving these rewards.^v
 - Boys were 65% more likely to choose an unhealthy food if it featured a sports celebrity endorsement.^{vi}

Advocacy triggers

What is being done in this space?

In WA

- Healthway has a focus on increasing healthy sport sponsorship through:
 - Health promotion sponsorship grants.
 - Organisations who receive sponsorship must adhere to minimum requirements, including but not limited to: provision of healthy food and drink options; provision of free drinking water; alcohol and/or unhealthy food/drink must not be provided as prizes or awards^{vii}
 - Healthy Sporting Club Program to support WA clubs to provide healthier menus at club-run canteens and kiosks.
- The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has a Targeted Participation Program:
 - Provides funding for organisations to promote participation and active engagement of low-participation Western Australian communities in sport and active recreation. ^{viii}

Examples from interstate

- 2007 VicHealth “Water in Sport” initiative^{ix}
 - \$500,000 in funding for nine local councils to promote healthy drink options at sporting venues.
 - Targeting areas with high rates of obesity and sugary drink consumption.

Gaps for Consideration

- How effective are the above initiatives? There is little in the way of evaluation.
- There are no rigorous studies evaluating the effectiveness of policy interventions organised through sporting organisations to increase healthy behaviours, attitudes, knowledge or the inclusion of health-oriented policies.^x
- There is a gap in evidence relating to the sports setting as a food and health-promotion environment.
- There is little evidence relating to sports sponsorship using public health messaging, and its impact on consumer behaviour.
- There is little population-level evidence regarding the impact of fast food sponsorship in sport.

Advocacy triggers

Media Advocacy | Political Advocacy | Coalition Building | Consensus Statements | Research & Translation | Policy and Regulation | Systems Advocacy

References

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- ⁱⁱ Bestman, A., et al. (2015) [Children’s implicit recall of junk food, alcohol and gambling sponsorship in Australian sport](#). *BMC Public Health*, 15, 1022.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Tomlin, S., Radomiljac, A., and Kay, A. (2015) [Health and Wellbeing of Children in Western Australia 2014: Overview and Trends](#), Department of Health, Western Australia.
- ^{iv} Kelly, B., et al, (2011) [Food company sponsors are kind, generous and cool”: \(Mis\)conceptions of junior sports players](#) *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 8:95
- ^v Ibid.
- ^{vi} VicHealth (201), *Sports start endorsement works a treat on junk food packaging* (website), accessed from < <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/media-releases/sports-start-endorsement-works-a-treat-on-junk-food-packaging>>
- ^{vii} Healthway WA (2017), *Health Promotion Sponsorship over \$5000, Sports, Art, Racing and Community Events, Sponsorship Guidelines*, accessed from < <https://www.healthway.wa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Over-5000-Sponsorship-Guidelines.pdf>>
- ^{viii} Government of Western Australia, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (2017). *Targeted Participation Programme* accessed from < <https://www.dsr.wa.gov.au/funding/targeted-participation-program-funding-scheme>>
- ^{ix} VicHealth (2017), *Water in sport grants 2017-2020* (webpage), accessed from < <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding/water-in-sport-grants-2017-2020>>
- ^x Priest, N., Armstrong, R., Doyle, J., Waters, E. (2008) Policy interventions implemented through sporting organisations for promoting healthy behaviour change. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, DOI:10.1002/14651858.CD004809.pub3

Advocacy triggers

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