

Healthy Food Partnership Executive Committee

Communiqué

7 December 2018 - Meeting 10

The Australian Government, food industry bodies and public health groups met today to progress the work of the Healthy Food Partnership, a joint collaboration which supports and encourages Australians to eat well and live healthier lives.

The Partnership, which is chaired by the Australian Government Minister with portfolio responsibility for food, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, comprises representatives from ALDI, the Australian Food and Grocery Council, Ausveg, Coles, Dairy Australia, Dietitians Association of Australia, Food Standards Australia New Zealand, Meat and Livestock Australia, Metcash, National Heart Foundation of Australia, Public Health Association of Australia, the Quick Service Restaurant Forum, Restaurant and Catering Industry Association, Woolworths and the Department of Health.

The meeting welcomed two new member organisations, ALDI and Restaurant and Catering Industry Association, to the Executive Committee.

The meeting received updates on the group's activities and noted significant progress had been made across all working groups. In particular, the recent public consultation on draft food reformulation targets for sugars, sodium and saturated fat, and food category definitions was noted. Members expressed their appreciation to the individuals and organisations that took time to provide thoughtful and detailed feedback on the draft food reformulation targets. All submissions will be considered by the Reformulation Working Group, where a staged approach to implementation will be developed.

In line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines, strategies for evaluation and monitoring of the Partnership activities and communications will continue to be developed as working groups move into the implementation phase. Membership of a new Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group was agreed to take the work forward into the next phase.

The meeting agreed to launch the Food Service Pledge Scheme in the ACT initially in early 2019 with the aim of rolling out nationally later in 2019. The aim of the pledge scheme is for food businesses to voluntarily commit to provide Australians with healthier options and appropriate portion sizes when eating outside the home.

Minister McKenzie acknowledged the importance of the Partnership's work, and efforts of food businesses on portion size, nutrient reformulation and awareness activities. The development of reformulation targets will assist to reduce population level consumption of sodium, sugars and saturated fat and to help all Australians eat in a way that better aligns with the Australian Dietary Guidelines. This will help to reduce diet related chronic disease, overweight and obesity in Australia.

Further information about work plans and membership of the working groups is available online at www.health.gov.au/healthyfoodpartnership.

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Healthy Food Partnership achievements to date

1. Reviewed international reformulation targets and Australian consumption data to determine 36 food categories for draft sodium, sugars and saturated fats reformulation targets.
2. Public consultation on draft food reformulation targets for sugars, sodium and saturated fats.
3. Delivery of final reports of the Food Service and Portion Size working groups (available on the website).
4. Agreement of Portion Size recommendations to be progressed in 2019. Work to commence on implementing the recommended terms used to describe serve size, serving size and portion size.
5. Consultation round table meetings held with key stakeholders to discuss the development of the Food Service Pledge Scheme. The three key areas are: Better choices, Better ingredients and Better awareness.
6. Food Service Pledge Scheme – agreement to launch the “Pilot” Pledge Scheme in the ACT in early 2019. Food service businesses will be able to make voluntary pledges around portion sizes and menu items such that they better align with the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
7. Healthy Food Partnership awareness activities – regular social media posts on Twitter and Facebook have commenced and will continue throughout the holiday season and into 2019.
8. Entering the second phase of the Healthy Food Partnership with the establishment of new Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group to continue to implement the agreed activities.