

Aide-Mémoire

Draft Public Health Advisory Committee report on food environments

Date due to MO:	6 March 2024	Action required by:	7 March 2024
Security level:	IN CONFIDENCE	Health Report number:	H2024037114
To:	Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister of Health		
Consulted:	Health New Zealand: <input type="checkbox"/> Māori Health Authority: <input type="checkbox"/>		

Contact for telephone discussion

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Purpose

1. This aide-mémoire responds to your request to the Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) Chair, Kevin Hague, to share a draft copy of the PHAC's report on food environments titled *Rebalancing our food system* prior to your meeting on 7 March 2024.
2. A summary of the draft report is set out below.

Background

3. In 2023, the previous Minister of Health asked the PHAC to look at ways to improve New Zealand's food environment for health and wellbeing. This was the PHAC's major topic of focus in 2023.
4. The PHAC recently shared *Rebalancing our food system* (the draft report) with 4 external experts: Sir Ashley Bloomfield, Dr Christina McKerchar, Professor Cliona Ni Murchu, and **s 9(2)(a), s 9(2)(ba)(i)** for a final high-level review.

Summary of the draft report

5. The PHAC has taken a strong rights-based approach to their draft report. The PHAC also engaged with non-governmental organisations, the food industry, and government agencies to seek their views, and develop recommendations.
6. The draft report states that the food system in New Zealand is currently out of balance with a lack of healthy, affordable, and nourishing food options available to many people in the places they live.
7. It explores the health impacts of New Zealand's food environments, and what is getting in the way within the food system to support New Zealanders' health and wellbeing.

PHAC's proposed recommendations

8. The draft report contains 5 priority action areas with 13 specific recommendations within those areas. The 5 priority actions areas are:
 - a. the development of a unified food system for all New Zealanders
 - b. enable local communities, including iwi to ensure the food system meets their needs and aspirations

- c. that central and local government take action and use legislation, policy, and regulatory levers to create and foster healthy food environments action to eliminate food insecurity
 - d. work transforming the food system is accompanied by data collection, research, monitoring and surveillance.
9. Some of the key specific recommendations include:
- a. development of a national food strategy, and a cross-government entity or Ministerial responsibility for food and food security
 - b. the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) and Ministry for Primary Industries to have equal input into the joint food regulation system with Australia, and include indigenous participation in Joint Food System decision making
 - c. to resource and enable community leadership for local food systems, including local and regional food strategies and programmes
 - d. support the growth and revitalisation of indigenous Māori food systems
 - e. improve the nutritional content of food via a comprehensive reformulation programme, including compositional limits and mandatory labelling and fiscal levers to drive reformulation of processed foods
 - f. regulatory measures aimed to provide a healthy food environment for children and young people, including restrictions on the marketing, advertising and sponsorship of unhealthy food and drinks, including digital content
 - g. regulatory measures aimed to provide healthy food and drink policies in schools and other child focussed settings
 - h. using fiscal measures to support children's healthy food consumption, for example a levy on sugar sweetened beverages
 - i. review and amend the Local Government Act to strengthen the ability of local government
 - j. support a more resilient and sustainable approach to ensuring food security for all New Zealanders, including sustained funding of government led initiatives
 - k. support food security and nutrition in pregnancy, breastfeeding, and childhood to extended parental leave policies and provision of support for breastfeeding
 - l. expanding food in schools programmes (e.g. Ka Ora Ka Ako)
 - m. strengthen actions to tackle poverty and reduce cost-of-living and food affordability pressures, including fiscal measures to reduce the cost of fruit and vegetables and other core foods or increase income available for healthy food
 - n. work with the Grocery Commissioner to ensure actions to diversify the food supply result in improvements in food security
 - o. fund implementation of a regular child and adult national nutrition survey(s) to monitor dietary intake and identify priorities for nutrition-related policy
 - p. develop and implement a national monitoring framework to provide resources, data and tools to assess the impacts of local and national food system interventions and policies on health and wellbeing, as part of a National Food Strategy.

Next steps

10. The PHAC plan to finalise their report at their next meeting on 26 March 2024. A final copy of the report will be provided to you.



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PROACTIVELY RELEASED