



# Obesity in Australia under review

## *New inquiry by the House Health Committee*

The House Health Committee is to conduct a new inquiry into obesity in Australia.

With obesity rates in Australia already high and growing, the parliamentary inquiry will investigate what the long-term health ramifications are of Australians' growing waistlines.

According to a 2007 OECD report, Australia has the fifth highest adult obesity rate (21.7 per cent), behind the United States (32.2 per cent), Mexico (30.2 per cent), the United Kingdom (23 per cent) and Greece (21.9 per cent). The Australasian Society for the Study of Obesity states that around 25 per cent of Australian children are currently overweight or obese, a huge jump from five per cent in the 1960s. Access Economics calculates that the yearly financial cost of obesity in Australia is in the region of \$3.7 billion.

The House of Representatives Committee, chaired by Steve Georganas (Member for Hindmarsh, SA), will investigate the increasing prevalence of obesity in the Australian population and report on future implications for Australia's health system.

Announcing the inquiry, Mr Georganas said that "there has been a number of studies to-date into the causes and consequences of obesity. This inquiry into obesity will not simply reiterate these, but rather investigate the impact that obesity is having on the health system now and into the future. The Committee also intends to survey a range of preventative strategies (implemented by governments, industry, individuals and the broader community) for lowering Australia's obesity rate amongst children, youth and adults."

The Committee invites interested organisations and individuals to make written submissions to the inquiry, addressing the terms of reference, by 16 May 2008.

**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Steve Georganas, on (02) 6277 4415 (Parliament House) or (08) 8376 9000 (electorate office).

**For all other inquiries**, please contact the Inquiry Secretary by phone on (02) 6277 4145, or visit the Committee's website: [www.aph.gov.au/haa](http://www.aph.gov.au/haa)