

KE 16105108

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing  
House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
AUSTRALIA



Re: Submission for the Inquiry into Obesity in Australia

15<sup>th</sup> May 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

A minority of adult Australians currently have a healthy body mass index (BMI).<sup>1</sup>

The direct and indirect consequences of overweight and obesity to individuals and our communities are well established. The knowledge is in, action is required.

Sound experience still exists within our communities for effectively preventing and reducing overweight and obesity because 30-40% of adults still reside in the healthy BMI category.<sup>1</sup> The solutions to this problem are self-evident, but their delivery needs to be tailored to meet the demands of the different lifestyle demographics that exist across our communities.

We should aim to achieve a large majority (75%) of adult Australians with a healthy BMI.

More 'healthy BMI' parents will simultaneously improve guidance, example and support for children and youth struggling with excess body-weight. For example, maybe a simple message to parents to 'keep their (kids) waist circumference to less than half their (kids) height', potentially avoiding the risks associated with a body-weight focus in children and youth.<sup>2</sup>

Overweight and obesity in Australia whilst challenging, will be reduced so long as we act to support those adults that require the self-enlightened commitment necessary to achieve a healthy BMI.

We should strongly support coordinated public health awareness, together with customised approaches to preventive healthcare that are relevant to consumers. We also need to improve the accessibility, safety and appeal of public amenities in our higher risk communities in order to support more physical activity.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy M. Morgan", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

**Timothy M. Morgan** B.Pharm(Hons), PhD, MPS, MRACI  
Executive Director

References

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2006. Australia's health 2006. AIHW cat. no. AUS 73. p.184, 187.
2. Garnett SP, Baur LA, Cowell CT. Waist-to-height ratio: a simple option for determining excess central adiposity in young people. *Int J Obes (Lond)*. 2008 Apr 15

Direct interest

Industry sector – Personal Services; Preventive healthcare; [www.healthoptimiser.com.au](http://www.healthoptimiser.com.au)