

From: The Goss Family

Sent: Monday, 23 June 2008

To: Committee, Reps (REPS)

Subject: Submission to the secretary of the relevant committee, House of Representatives, PO Box 6021, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600.

Dear Secretary,

I would like to put in a submission regarding some simple solutions to Obesity that could easily be put into place to help with the Obesity issues that many people face today.

Firstly I would like to ask some questions:

1. Why is it that if you go into any shop, whether it be to buy tiles or tools, or to buy food, there is usually a chocolate box on the counter.
2. Why do sports clubs and schools use chocolate as a fund raising tool?
3. Why is it that chocolate, soft drinks like coke, junk food and biscuits are usually always displayed at the end of supermarket rows to entice the consumer?
4. If the government is serious about helping Australian people to beat Obesity then why doesn't it put a higher tax on junk foods and confectionary and allow people to pay less for wholemeal products, help by subsidising fruit and vegetables, the purchase of whole foods and health items, and assist people who wish to attend fitness classes etc.

It seems to me that although we all know that chocolate and sugary foods are bad for us, it is still cheaper to buy chocolate bars than healthy nuts or a fruit alternative. When selecting grocery items such as breakfast cereal, it is much cheaper to buy things like coco pops than it would be to buy healthy muesli. It is cheaper to buy Yoghurt alternatives than to like the Nestles kids packs of so called yoghurt packs, but much dearer to buy the real yoghurt brands. Plastic fake sliced cheese is cheap, yet a good block of cheese is expensive. You can buy a 1.25litre of coke for \$1 yet you pay \$5 for a bottle of fruit juice, and then it still has added sugar. The really nice organic brands are just too expensive to consider. A family can buy white bread for less than healthy wholemeal bread, so of course they are going to opt for the white. The real issue is that it costs more to be healthy than it does to eat rubbish and be unhealthy. It is the same with healthcare. To go to the doctor for many it costs nothing, because they are on a health care card or the doctor's bulk bill. To go to a Naturopath or an alternative therapist, there is often no rebate and it may be anything from \$50 + for visits, then you have to buy vitamins, which are not subsidised whereas drugs are.

How can the government tell us that they really care about Obesity when they allow this to happen? You can eat all the rubbish under the sun, sit around and do nothing to help yourself get fit or keep healthy, and you can be a burden to the rest of society because of your choices and you are assisted by the government. Why does the government support this and not support the people who are working hard at keeping fit, staying healthy, working to support those who are not working, and generally keeping us keeping on. It seems to me that the way our society in Australia works is, the less you do for yourself, the more others do it for you, the more you do for yourself the less support you get from anyone else. Where is the incentive to go on? I have always tried to be a healthy person. I grow my own vegetables and fruit, I play sport and swim to keep fit but I do struggle to keep weight off. I am generally healthy and very rarely need a doctor. I do buy vitamins and very occasionally go to a naturopath. I pay my own way and do not get any help from the government. Despite my best efforts to keep fit, healthy and keep weigh off I am addicted to chocolate and I find it hard to be constantly faced with chocolate everywhere I turn. I would love to be hypnotized to help me with my chocolate addiction. Why doesn't this kind of therapy be offered to anyone who is willing to undergo therapy in order to keep from becoming obese, rather than supporting people once they become so fat they have serious health problems and end up being pensioned off, treated with drugs and in hospitals regularly for ongoing health issues etc. I also agree that schools should be given funds to encourage growing food, eating fresh foods and helping kids to make the right choices. Employ a person in each school, or in a cluster of schools to be

responsible for getting a garden growing at the school, don't leave it up to the staff already too flat out doing what they are doing, make more positions available for this to be implemented.

If the government are really behind helping to beat obesity then I suggest that the government puts very high taxes on all junk foods including soft drinks (which are responsible for many broken bones in teenagers who have had a lot of soft drink in their younger years), and encourage people to buy fruit and vegetables especially those grown chemically and geo free. I go further to suggest that the government encourage people to get out and exercise by giving people vouchers for gym classes or water aerobic classes. Encourage us rather than strangle us with rising prices for things we do need. Finally I submit that it is against the law to display chocolates and junk food at checkouts in supermarkets, and against the law for fund raising chocolates to be on every counter in every store, and for chocolate and confectionary of any kind, to be used as a fundraiser because it is only encouraging us to eat the stuff, make ourselves fatter and more likely to become obese.

Yours sincerely

Christianne Goss