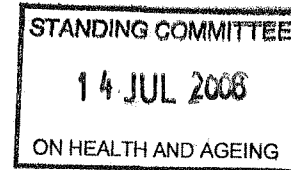


Submission No. 121

(Inq into Obesity)

MC 17/7/08

From: Gerard van Rijswijk |
Sent: Tuesday, 8 July 2008 1:18 PM
To: Committee, HAA (REPS)
Subject: Inquiry into Obesity



Mr James Catchpole,
Committee Secretary

Dear Mr Catchpole,

Obesity is a complex, multifaceted issue which has received much media attention in recent years. There have been a number of inquiries into obesity and related health issues with submissions to those inquiries in many cases suggesting some form of regulation of fast foods or fattening foods or for changes to food labelling.

The problem then becomes one of definition.

Whether or not consumption of certain foods leads to an increase in weight depends on a range of factors apart from the composition of the food in question, the most important ones being perhaps the quantities consumed and the consumer's lifestyle. It is certainly not dependent on whether the food is 'fast' or not. Food that may lead to one individual putting on additional weight may be entirely appropriate for another who, perhaps, leads a more active life.

It is also unclear as to whether additional labelling helps or hinders, as few consumers appear to know what to do with the information already available. The tendency appears to be to select one attribute of the product being selected – e.g. fat content – and decide on that basis alone whether the food is 'good' or 'bad'.

I attach, for your information, a copy of a submission on this subject we made to a recent SA parliamentary inquiry.

I trust that you find the information helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Gerard van Rijswijk
Senior Policy Advisor
NARGA

8/07/2008