

**Eat well be active.**



# Healthy Weight Strategy for South Australia 2006-2010

## Summary



Government of South Australia  
Department of Health



## Premier's Foreword



The number of overweight and obese South Australians has risen alarmingly in recent times, with more than half the adult population now falling into this category.

Even more worrying is that one in every four children is today in the unhealthy weight range, which places them at increased risk of health, emotional and social problems.

The implications of these trends are very serious – not just for the lives of individuals, but also for the health system and the State's economy.

The State Government is well aware of the problem, and it has addressed it in *South Australia's Strategic Plan* alongside a range of issues affecting human wellbeing.

Specifically, the State is aiming to reduce the percentage of South Australians who are overweight or obese by 10% by 2014.

This *Eat Well Be Active Strategy* is a comprehensive plan of action to foster healthy weight among South Australians over the next five years.

It summarises the current evidence, discusses the consequences and maps out practical ways in which we can all make a difference.

I commend this strategy to government, non-government and community organisations alike, and I look forward to working with them to bring about a healthier State.

**Mike Rann**  
**Premier of South Australia**

**May 2006**



## 1. Introduction

Over half of South Australian adults and one in four children are overweight and rates are increasing at around 1% per year.

Overweight is associated with a range of chronic physical health conditions and can also contribute to poor mental health. This has serious consequences for the individual and is a major public health issue, as well as a financial burden on the government and the community.

The South Australian Government is committed to preventing overweight and will take a leadership role in tackling this problem. The *South Australia Strategic Plan*, which outlines the vision for a prosperous and environmentally sustainable State, includes the reduction of overweight and obesity as a target; specifically *to reduce the percentage of South Australians who are overweight or obese by 10% within 10 years*.

The *Eat Well Be Active Healthy Weight Strategy for South Australia 2006-2010*, presented here in a shortened version, provides direction for the way forward in achieving this target.

## 2. Guiding Principles for the *Eat Well Be Active Strategy*

The following principles underpin the *Eat Well Be Active Strategy*:

- Use existing evidence to inform strategies for creating health promoting environments (physical, social, political and economic).
- Recognise that behaviour change is complex and takes a long time.
- Support work that increases knowledge about how to prevent weight gain.
- Help those most in need and close the health gap between the most and least advantaged groups.
- Build partnerships that value and support the role that individuals, families, communities, government, non-government and industry can and should play in addressing the issue.
- Promote the benefits of healthy eating, active living and healthy weight in a positive way, avoiding individual blame.
- Ensure programs of action include Aboriginal communities using the principles of reconciliation outlined in the *Doing it Right Framework*.
- Build on State and National initiatives, while allowing for flexibility in regional and local responses.



### 3. Aims and Objectives of the *Eat Well Be Active Strategy*

The aim of the *Eat Well Be Active Strategy* is:

- To improve the health and wellbeing of South Australians by working towards achieving the target identified in the *South Australia Strategic Plan* to reduce the percentage of South Australians who are overweight or obese by 10% within 10 years.

The objectives of the *Eat Well Be Active Strategy* are:

- To slow, stop and then reverse the current rate of weight gain, and support all South Australians in achieving a healthy weight.
- To increase the number of people whose diet is consistent with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.
- To increase the number of people who are physically active in line with the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians* and *Australia's Physical Activity Recommendations for Children*.
- To make the greatest gain in those population groups who have the highest burden of overweight and obesity and poorest health outcomes.
- To create environments that encourage healthy eating and physical activity behaviours.

### 4. The Focus of the *Eat Well Be Active Strategy*

The *Eat Well Be Active Strategy* emphasises the following:

- **Across government approaches** - it is essential that all levels of government work together across different sectors and in partnership with non-government and community organisations.
- **Prevention** - preventing weight gain is an easily understood and realistic message.
- **Reducing inequalities** - strategies must support those who are the most disadvantaged in the community.
- **Environments and settings** - policies and practices in different settings need to support healthy eating, physical activity and healthy weight.
- **Multiple strategies** - simple solutions do not work given the complexity of the determinants of overweight; a variety of strategies will be necessary.
- **Research and evaluation** - practice must be evidence-based and evaluation is essential for all initiatives.



## 5. Outcomes in Key Action Areas that will Support Work to Promote Healthy Weight

The *Eat Well Be Active Strategy* recognises the need for evidence-based actions in a range of settings as well as the need for health promoting public policy and strong leadership. Priority outcomes are identified below; specific strategies are included in the full document.

Key Action Areas	Outcomes
Neighbourhoods and Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supportive environments that foster a diversity of physical activity and healthy eating opportunities.</li> <li>2. Increased active transport.</li> <li>3. Increased opportunities for healthy eating and safe physical activity including sport, recreation and play in neighbourhoods.</li> </ol>
Schools, Preschools and Childcare	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improved school, preschool and childcare environments that promote healthy eating and physical activity.</li> <li>2. Strengthened culturally inclusive and developmentally appropriate healthy eating and physical activity learning programs and experiences in education and childcare services.</li> <li>3. Enhanced use of schools, preschools and childcare services as an avenue to strengthen the knowledge and skills of parents and carers about physical activity and healthy eating (including breastfeeding) in culturally appropriate ways.</li> </ol>
Workplaces	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased proportion of workplaces supporting healthy eating through policies, programs and supportive environments for all staff.</li> <li>2. Increased proportion of workplaces supporting being physically active through policies, programs and supportive environments for all staff.</li> </ol>
Primary Health Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improved capacity of community and primary health care professionals to promote healthy weight using evidence-based guidelines.</li> <li>2. Implementation in all health services of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) <i>Clinical Practice Guidelines for Management of Overweight and Obesity</i>.</li> </ol>

Key Action Areas	Outcomes
Maternal and Child Health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased proportion of babies born within the healthy weight range.</li> <li>2. Increased proportion of infants who are fed according to the <i>NHMRC Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers</i>.</li> <li>3. Improved parent knowledge, skills and confidence in supporting the development of their children's healthy eating and physical activity habits to promote growth and development and healthy weight.</li> </ol>
Food Supply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improved access to an appropriate and affordable food supply, in particular for vulnerable groups including geographically isolated groups (rural, remote, poorly serviced urban areas) and Aboriginal South Australians, young homeless people and others on low incomes.</li> <li>2. Food regulation processes that are consistent with <i>Australian Dietary Guidelines</i> and support healthy eating patterns.</li> <li>3. Increased average daily fruit and vegetable consumption across the South Australian population.</li> <li>4. Institutional and other relevant food services offer a variety of food choices consistent with <i>Australian Dietary Guidelines</i>.</li> <li>5. Increased availability of water in public buildings and public spaces.</li> </ol>
Media and Marketing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased community awareness and understanding of the importance of healthy eating and physical activity within the context of a positive body image.</li> <li>2. Protection for young people against the promotion through advertising and media of foods and drinks of high energy density and poor nutritional value.</li> <li>3. The community is informed about current evidence-based weight management strategies.</li> </ol>
Regulatory and Fiscal Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regulatory and fiscal policy to support healthy eating and physical activity.</li> </ol>
Government Policy and Leadership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A supportive environment that promotes healthy weight is created.</li> </ol>
Research, Surveillance and Evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence-based strategies for the prevention of weight gain are developed.</li> <li>2. Equity consideration is given to all proposed major interventions.</li> <li>3. Appropriate monitoring indicators are developed for all aspects of the <i>Eat Well Be Active Strategy</i>.</li> </ol>

## 6. Monitoring the *Eat Well Be Active* Strategy

To evaluate the implementation of the *Eat Well Be Active Strategy* and to monitor progress towards achieving the *South Australia Strategic Plan* target to reduce overweight and obesity by 10% within 10 years, a number of indicators will be monitored. Those indicators which can be monitored from current data sources will be used initially and will be updated. The Department of Health is currently scoping further indicators in collaboration with other sectors.

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