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### **GOVT TAKES NEXT STEP ON LIMITING JUNK FOOD ADS**

Health Minister John Hill today released a consultation paper canvassing options to limit advertising of junk food to children.

“Urgent action is required if we are going to combat the epidemic of childhood obesity,” he said.

“We would prefer the industry and TV stations to take their own voluntary action, or a national approach to this issue, but in the absence of this the State Government has indicated it is willing to consider its own state-wide restrictions on advertising.”

Minister Hill launched the consultation paper as the Queensland Premier Anna Bligh announced that her state would follow SA’s lead – and investigate limiting junk food ads.

SA’s consultation paper examines options for controlling advertising such as a complete ban on junk food ads during children’s viewing times, and looks at use of gimmicks and giveaways with junk foods, and the impact on children.

Minister Hill said the Government was calling for submissions on the paper – asking community, schools, parents, and industries affected to comment on the possible measures.

“More than half of South Australian adults and a quarter of South Australian children are overweight or obese,” he said.

“The State Government knows we need to act. We are doing a range of things to help our kids already – such as banning junk food in schools canteens in South Australia.

“But parents have made it very clear that they feel television advertising of junk food – and in particular direct marketing to children – is really having an impact on their children.

“A Department of Health survey of 2,000 South Australians aged 18 years and over in 2006 showed that 78 per cent strongly felt there was too much advertising of unhealthy food in children’s viewing times.

“What we want to do is to help parents help their children. We know that parents need support in helping their kids stay healthy for life.”

Minister Hill said NSW research from 2007 revealed that there were 10 advertisements for high fat and /or sugary foods shown per hour during peak children's viewing times on Sydney commercial TV.

The South Australian Parliament's Social Development Committee has investigated the issue of childhood obesity, and called for controls over TV advertising for children. This recommendation received bi-partisan support from the members of the committee.

In the UK, the communications regulator, OFCOM, has introduced advertising rules for foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar. The regulator has banned these ads during all programs that are made for children including pre-schoolers, or any program that has particular appeal to people under the age of 16, from 2009.

"We now invite the food, marketing and advertising industries to respond to our discussion paper," Minister Hill said.

"We are interested in hearing how we can, together, prevent childhood obesity and improve children's nutrition in South Australia."

This paper can be downloaded from the SA Health web site at [www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/health-promotion.htm](http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/health-promotion.htm)

Written submissions can be provided to SA Health by October 31.