

# rethink sugary drink

## Local governments as leaders on reducing sugary drinks

**Vision:** Victorian local governments are leaders in creating healthy drinks environments. This enables Victorian residents to easily access free drinking water while sugary drink consumption amongst adults and children reduces.

**Support available:** A number of campaigns, services and resources are running across Victoria to enable local governments to successfully incorporate ambitious targets to decrease saturation of sugary drinks and increase access to water in their Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

**Relevant policy:** Victorian local governments are required to document their approach and strategy to enable people living in the municipality to achieve maximum health and wellbeing in their Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP). MPHWPs need to consider the directions and priorities of the [Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015–2019](#). This is a requirement under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

The Victorian Government's [Healthy Choices Guidelines](#) enable a consistent approach to healthy food and drink provision at events and in food outlets across Victoria. Implementation of the guidelines by local governments, workplaces, schools and businesses is supported through the [Health Eating Advisory Service](#) (HEAS).

### Opportunities

There are a number of opportunities for local governments to connect healthy eating strategies to other council priority areas. These include:

- *Link reduced sugary drink consumption to healthy physical environments planning*  
This includes planning of water fountain availability in recreation areas, public pools, leisure facilities and sports grounds. It may also extend to clean water ways and parklands (reduction of waste from sugary drink containers) and to removal of unhealthy vending from public transport hubs and sports and recreation facilities, community centres and other council owned or run facilities.
- *Link reduced sugary drink consumption to waste reduction, sustainability and environmental policies*  
A number of councils set sustainability goals in their 2013–2017 MPHWP, however there were limited mentions of access to water and healthy foods within these. Increasing consumption of seasonal locally grown plant foods reduces waste and greenhouse gas production from growing, manufacturing and transportation. Increasing tap water consumption while decreasing reliance on packaged beverages, including sugary drinks, reduces waste further.
- *Implement Healthy Choices guidelines in all sport and leisure facilities*  
Since the last round of MPHWP planning the Victorian Government has launched [Healthy Choices Guidelines for sport and leisure centres](#). Councils can commit to implementing these guidelines in all their owned, run or contracted sport and leisure facilities with support from the HEAS and Achievement Program. Agree to adhere to Healthy Choices

in all council facilities by the end of the MPHWP timeframe with the first year's goal to apply Healthy Choices criteria to provision of drinks.

- *Local Government Rethink Sugary Drink Events toolkit*  
The Rethink Sugary Drink Events toolkit is now freely available for councils to [download](#) and use in practice. This will assist local governments to set achievable targets around rethinking sugary drink at council events and / or consistent provision of free drinking water at events.
- *Achievement Program registration and progress*  
Joining and progressing through the [Achievement Program](#) benchmarks (for healthy eating and other priority areas) can provide councils with both a framework for making progress on healthy eating and consumption of water as well as providing a measureable outcome. Council can register as a workplace, as can their owned or managed facilities such as leisure centres and early education settings, under the Achievement Program education arm.
- *Healthy Eating Advisory Service FoodChecker*  
In 2017 the [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#) (HEAS) will launch an online self-assessment for organisations to monitor progress against the Healthy Choices guidelines for food and drink provision in their retail food outlets and catering. Local governments could incorporate this self-assessment as part of their annual monitoring of healthy eating and oral health targets.
- *Healthy Eating Advisory Service healthy vending assessment*  
Local governments can use this [online tool](#) to assess the food and drinks available in their vending machines. They will receive a report outlining whether or not their machines meet the Healthy Choices guidelines and recommendations for improving the food and drinks offered.
- *VicHealth water fountain guidelines*  
[These guidelines](#) provide practical advice and tips on water fountain installation and maintenance. Local governments can use these guidelines to improve access to tap water and to increase use of the water fountains.
- *Dental Health Services Victoria Oral Health Profiles*  
[These profiles](#) provide local governments with population oral health data to undertake comprehensive public health and wellbeing planning. It shows how the oral health indicators for each LGA compare to the Victorian average.
- *Improving oral health – Local government action guide*  
Dental Health Services Victoria in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services have developed the [local government action guide](#) that outlines a range of evidence-informed actions that councils can consider when preparing their MPHWP Municipal Early Years Plans and other strategies, including consumption data on sugary drinks.
- *[LiveLighter sugary drinks campaign](#)*  
The media content, interactive resources and collateral can be used by local governments to increase community awareness about the health effects of sugary drinks and to help publicly communicate the reasons for local policy change around drink provision.

## Key facts on sugary drinks and health<sup>1</sup>

- Sugary drinks are high in kilojoules, which can lead to weight gain and obesity.
- Sugary drinks include all non-alcoholic water-based beverages with added sugar, such as soft drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks, sports drinks and cordial.
- Obesity is a leading risk factor for type 2 diabetes, heart and kidney disease, stroke and some cancers.
- Drinking sugary drinks can lead to tooth decay.
- A regular 600mL bottle of soft drink contains about 16 teaspoons of sugar.
- A regular 375mL can of soft drink contains about 10 teaspoons of sugar.
- The World Health Organization, World Cancer Research Fund and Australian Dietary Guidelines all recommend sugary drink consumption be restricted or avoided altogether.
- The World Health Organization recommends added sugars make up a maximum of 10% of people's daily energy, and ideally no more than 5% (or 6 teaspoons per day) for the biggest health benefit.
- Research has shown that consuming 340mL of sugary drink a day (less than one can) increases your risk of type 2 diabetes by 22% when compared to drinking one can a month or less.
- Drinking a can of soft drink a day could lead to more than 6kg of weight gain in a year if you don't burn off the extra kilojoules.

## Consumption statistics

- The average Australian soft drink consumer drinks the equivalent of one 375mL can a day.<sup>2</sup>
- Teenagers and young adults, especially males, drink the most sugary drinks, with some young men aged 19–30 consuming 1.5L per day.<sup>3</sup>
- About 40 per cent of Victorian children drink soft drink most days.<sup>4</sup>
- Sugary drink consumption is higher among lower socio-economic groups, compared to higher socio-economic groups.
- In the 12 months to October 2012, Australians bought 1.28 billion litres of carbonated/still drinks with sugar, with regular cola drinks being the most popular (447 million litres).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rethink sugary drink <http://www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au/facts>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Health Survey (Nutrition First Results - Foods and Nutrients, 2011-12)

<sup>3</sup> Sweetened\* beverage consumption, Australian Health Survey: Nutrition First Results - Foods and Nutrients, 2011-12, Australian Bureau of Statistics

<sup>4</sup> 39 per cent of Victorian children consumed soft drink in the previous 24 hours. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2015b, Customised report: Australian Health Survey, 2011-12, ABS, Canberra)

<sup>5</sup> Retail World December 2012.

## Setting measurable goals

The following table provides examples of indicators and measurable targets around health eating and oral health that could be incorporated into MPHWP and will contribute to reduced consumption of sugary drinks and increased consumption and availability of water.

Strategic area	Indicator	Measures	Measure detail	Source of data
Healthy Eating	Increase healthy eating and active living.	Increase in adults and children who consume sufficient fruit and vegetables compared to 2015 levels	By 2021, one additional serve of fruit and veg consumed amongst children aged 4–12 years, adolescents aged 10–17 years and adults.	VPHS or VicHealth Indicators, use mean daily serves fruit and vegetables
	Reduce overweight and obesity	Decrease in percentage of adults and adolescents who consume soft drink weekly compared to 2015 levels	By 2021 <50% of adolescents and <35% adults have consumed sugary drinks in the past week	This matches Cancer Council Victoria targets  Measure via VPHS or VicHealth Indicators
		Council facilities, events and functions are compliant with Healthy Choices guidelines and are sugary drink free	100% council events and council managed facilities are soft drink free and have implemented healthy choices by 2021	Healthy Eating Advisory Services self-assessment tools  Achievement Program database
		Improve the oral and nutritional health of Aboriginal children	All council strategies to improve fruit and vegetable intake and reduce sugary drink intake include local strategies to improve the diet of Aboriginal children.	Koolin Balit (or updated strategy)  Reduced tooth decay in Aboriginal children (DHSV)
Oral Health	Increase Oral Health	Percentage of adults and adolescents who consume soft drink weekly	By 2021 <50% of adolescents and <35% adults have consumed sugary drinks in the past week	This matches Cancer Council Victoria targets  Measure via VPHS or VicHealth Indicators
	Children and adults have access to healthy eating and oral health	Improved access to drinking water in public places through installation of drinking water fountains	100% of council-managed sport and recreation centres are meeting the healthy Choices guidelines by 2021	VicHealth / Healthy Eating Advisory Services self-assessment tools
		Advocate for fluoridated drinking water	Free drinking water is available in community	Achievement Program

	initiatives to achieve good health outcomes	supply	areas and in recreation centres	database
		Support the Smiles for Miles and Achievement programs in early childhood facilities	X% increase in the proportion of the population accessing fluoridated water (use 2016 proportion as baseline)	Achievement Program database
			60% of early childhood settings and 30% of schools are active participators with the Achievement Program	HEAS Self-assessment or Achievement Program status
		Council functions, events and venues are compliant with Healthy Choices Guidelines	50% of all actively participating* settings (including early childhood, schools and workplaces) have committed to or achieved Healthy Choices.	Achievement Program progression
			100% council events and council managed facilities are soft drink free and have implemented healthy choices by 2021	See <a href="#">Rethink Sugary Drink events toolkit</a> for benchmarks.
		Improve the oral and nutritional health of Aboriginal children  Reduce the proportion of Aboriginal adults who are obese	All Aboriginal early childhood settings registered with Smiles for Miles are supported (and resourced) to progress through the award.	Reduced tooth decay in Aboriginal children and reduced gap in rates of tooth decay between Aboriginal children compared to all children, DHSV monitoring.
Create Healthy Environments	Opportunities for physical activity for all residents and promotion of healthier food and drink choices	Leisure and sporting facilities are implementing Healthy Choices and are Achievement Program settings	100% of council-managed sport and recreation centres are meeting the healthy Choices guidelines by 2021  Increase in Achievement Program members that are actively participating (use 2016 rates as baseline)  X% enrolled organisations are Achievement Program Health Promoting settings (set target per current progress)	Healthy Choices guidelines HEAS  Achievement Program database

## References and resources to empower local governments to take action on sugary drinks

State Government Victoria Healthy Choices Guidelines

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/preventive-health/nutrition/healthy-choices-for-retail-outlets-vending-machines-catering>

Achievement Program

<http://www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au/>

Healthy Eating Advisory Service

<http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/>

Healthy Eating Advisory Service healthy vending assessment

<http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/healthy-choices/healthy-vending/assessments>

LiveLighter Sugary Drinks Campaign

<https://livelighter.com.au/The-Facts/About-Sugary-Drinks>

Heart Foundation local government Heart Maps

<http://heartfoundation.org.au/programs/victorian-heart-maps>

VicHealth Indicators

<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/vichealth-indicators-survey-2011>

VicHealth Healthy Sporting Environments

<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/healthy-sporting-environments-program>

Rethink Sugary Drink event toolkit

<http://www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au/for-professionals/settings-resources.html>

Rethink Sugary Drink – For Professionals

<http://www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au/for-professionals>

Koolin Balit

- Key priority 1: A healthy childhood  
Improve the oral and nutritional health of Aboriginal children and increase their physical activity
- Key priority 2: Addressing risk factors  
Reduce the proportion of Aboriginal adults who are obese

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies/aboriginal-health/koolin-balit>

VicHealth water fountain guidelines

<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/provision-of-drinking-water-fountains-in-public-areas>

Dental Health Services Victoria

<https://www.dhsv.org.au/oral-health-programs/LGA-oral-health-profiles>

## Frequently asked questions

### Is it economically viable?

A number of large Victorian organisations and businesses have successfully removed sugary drinks or changed their display while maintaining overall drink sales and profits. This includes YMCA, Alfred Health and City of Melbourne sports and recreation centre. For more information see these case studies.

- Rethink Sugary Drink case studies <http://www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au/for-professionals/case-studies.html>
- VicHealth building the business case: Food and Drink Policies <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/healthy-choice-food>

### How can I work with vendors, suppliers and contractors to change the supply?

The Healthy Eating Advisory Service have a number of tools and resources to help you choose healthier options from your suppliers. They have also been working with suppliers to improve the offerings available to vendors. See the [HEAS website](#) for more information.

### How do I work with decision makers to address sugary drinks?

The [Rethink Sugary Drink](#) website contains many key facts and links to the evidence that you can reference to describe why sugary drinks are a priority area to address.

As mentioned above a number of large Victorian organisations and businesses have successfully removed sugary drinks or changed their display while maintaining overall drink sales and profits. See [Rethink Sugary Drink](#) and [VicHealth](#) for more information.

Additionally, Sugary Drinks are listed as a specific area for action in the [Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015–2019](#). There is plenty of support available so choosing the sugary drinks priority action area will ensure your council are well supported and able to demonstrate measurable progress on healthy eating.

### Where should we start?

A clear strong action your council can take is to implement the Victorian [Healthy Choices Guidelines](#) in all council owned, managed and contracted services, events and facilities. Implementation of the guidelines is well supported with resources from the [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#) and through the [Achievement Program](#). Set a goal to be compliant with Healthy Choices in all local government owned and managed facilities within your municipal public health and wellbeing plan and work towards this over the next four years drawing on external support as required.

Additionally, drinks on offer are often easier to assess and to change than foods. Agree to adhere to healthy choices in all council facilities by the end of the municipal public health and wellbeing plan timeframe with the first year's goal to be Healthy Choices compliant for drinks.

Alternatively start with events or a specific venue such as the leisure centre and phase sugary drinks out. See more on this in the [Rethink Sugary Drink events toolkit](#) or [Healthy Choices Guidelines for Sport and Recreation facilities](#)