

Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) Australia – Progress update 2019

Northern Territory Government

Policy information (July 2016 – December 2018)



Actions taken (July 2016 – December 2018) by the Northern Territory Government in relation to the recommended policies from the 2017 Food Policy Index report

ID	Domain	Recommended policy action	Progress against meeting recommended action
NT1	Monitoring and intelligence	Implement ongoing monitoring of the extent of marketing of unhealthy foods to children, and the nutritional quality of food provided / available in schools and public sector settings (such as hospitals, other government facilities providing food service)	<p>No specific monitoring of marketing of unhealthy food to children, however the Northern Territory (NT) Health policy for provision of food in NT Health premises, Healthy Choices Made Easy (HCME), prohibits marketing of unhealthy food and drinks. Regular audits of compliance to HCME are conducted.</p> <p>The <i>NT School Nutrition and Healthy Eating Policy</i> does not mention marketing specifically, however it precludes the sale of unhealthy food. There have been no reports of marketing of unhealthy food to children in schools.</p>
NT2	Food provision	Improve awareness and compliance with the existing 'Canteen, nutrition and healthy eating policy' in all schools (including government, independent and Catholic schools) by extending reporting mechanisms, incentives and support systems	This is ongoing, routine work. NT Health works with canteens in NT schools and the NT Department of Education to support the implementation of the canteen, nutrition and health eating policy.
NT3	Monitoring and intelligence	Actively monitor prices of healthy and unhealthy foods across the Northern Territory by widening the scope of the 'Market Basket Survey', including expansion of the survey to urban areas	<p>Unhealthy foods have been included in the 2016 and 2017 surveys and will be included in further surveys.</p> <p>The Market Basket Survey has always included NT urban stores, i.e. a major supermarket and 'corner store' (or small suburban supermarket) in each district centre town. With the exception of Darwin and Alice Springs, there is only one major supermarket and corner store in each of the district centre towns.</p>
NT4	Food retail	Expand existing work with retailers and food service outlets to improve in-store availability of healthy foods and limit availability and sales of unhealthy foods, particularly in remote stores	<p>Ongoing work, core business for public health nutritionists working in remote communities and the NT Health policy area provides strategic advice to key partners, including working with the Community Stores Licensing team in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.</p> <p>NT Health is also providing support to <i>Healthy Stores 2020</i>, research project by Menzies School of Health Research, that will assess the impact of consumer purchasing and retail performance of a population level intervention that specifically targets discretionary food and beverage products through reducing their merchandising (i.e. visibility and/or availability) in remote Australian community stores.</p>

NT5	Food provision	Establish a whole-of-government policy on healthy food provision by applying the NT Health 'Healthy Choices Made Easy' policy across all public sector settings (e.g., public sector workplaces) as well as settings under government control (e.g., sport and recreation facilities, community events)	The NT Department of Health (DoH) is not aware of any work to establish a whole of government policy, however other agencies have shown interest in developing a similar policy, particularly in regards to catering events and DoH is supporting this work when it arises.
NT6	Food labelling	Implement mandatory nutrition labelling on menus at food service outlets (e.g., fast food and other take-away food stores), in line with regulations in other States / Territories	In other jurisdictions, nutrition labelling regulations only apply to food businesses that have multiple outlets, i.e. chains. In response to mandatory requirements in other jurisdictions, major fast food chains have adopted nutrition labelling across their stores nationwide, including the NT. There are no 'chains' that only operate in the NT.
NT7	Governance	Implement formal health impact assessments as part of policy development and proposal processes, including explicit details about the consideration of potential impacts of policies on population nutrition and health	A formal process has not been established, however NT Health continues to provide comment on major NT Government policies and projects.
NT8	Food retail	Amend the planning framework to explicitly make health and healthy food environments a priority, as part of facilitating local governments to limit the placement / density of unhealthy food outlets while supporting healthy food outlets	No progress has been made in this area.
NT9	Food promotion	Implement policies to restrict the promotion of unhealthy food and beverages in settings controlled or managed by the Northern Territory government (e.g., public transport, bus shelters, government-owned	The NT DoH has contributed to national work that led to the development of an interim guide for reducing children's exposure to unhealthy food and drink marketing. This guide is for voluntary use by governments and was endorsed by Health Ministers at the last Council of Australian Governments Health Council meeting on 2 August 2018. The NT DoH has commenced discussion with the relevant areas to progress implementation of the guide.

		billboards, sporting facilities and events)	It should be noted however, that the NT Government has limited public owned facilities with advertising.
NT10	Food retail	Develop and implement programs, including incentives or accreditation schemes, for sports and recreation clubs to sell a healthier range of food and beverages whilst limiting availability of unhealthy food and beverages	The NT DoH is investigating options to progress work in this area.
NT11	Support for communities	Commit to ongoing, long-term support for social marketing campaigns promoting healthy eating (including tailored campaigns for remote communities), as part of broader efforts to improve population nutrition	The Department of Health has funded the NT branch of the Heart Foundation to implement <i>Live Lighter</i> social marketing campaign. Live Lighter aims to increase knowledge about healthy eating, physical activity and healthy weight. Promotion includes mass media, advertising, social media, online and printed resources, advocacy and retailers. In remote communities advertisements produced by Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation were utilised instead of the standard Live Lighter sugary drinks television commercials.
NT12	Food provision	Roll out the newly developed 'Healthy Workplace' resources to support healthy eating policy implementation in private sector workplaces	The healthy workplace toolkit "Your Simple Guide to Workplace Health and Well Being" was published online by the Northern Territory Government in 2017. This document is a practical guide to implementing workplace health programs. It is available online, to ensure government and private sector workplaces have access to it. The DoH provides support to implement the toolkit to workplaces as requested.
NT13	Food promotion	Require all organisations, such as community groups and sports clubs, that receive funding from the Northern Territory Government to restrict all promotion (including sponsorship) related to unhealthy food and beverages as a condition of receiving funding	This is not currently progressed as the grant management system is undergoing a review.
NT14	Support for communities	Roll out the 'Childhood Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle (COPAL)' program across the Northern Territory, providing funding and support for implementation at the	Commonwealth funding for COPAL is no longer available, however, the City of Palmerston Council who delivered the initiative, has continued to build on relationships created by COPAL, through employing a Health Programs Manager. No further funding for this initiative has been identified.

	local government and / or community level	
NT15 Monitoring and intelligence	Introduce regular measuring of children's height and weight at key stages of primary and secondary schools, on an 'opt-out' consent basis	The NT Department of Health is not aware of any work in this area. In the past 'opt-out' consent has not been approved in applications to the NT ethics committees for interventions and evaluations.

Additional actions/policies/progress related to improving the food environment / obesity prevention / population nutrition (not captured above)	
Action	Details
1. Childhood obesity management	The NT Department of Health has continued to support the community in childhood obesity management and is currently funding Healthy Territory Kids – a free, family based healthy lifestyle program for children aged 7-13 who are above a healthy weight. It engages with families and carers of the children, helping them to adopt a long-lasting healthy lifestyle. Healthy Territory Kids is the licensed, evidenced based Better Health Program that is currently delivered in New South Wales (where it is called Go4Fun®) and Perth (where it is called the Better Health Program). Healthy Territory Kids is being implemented in urban NT settings only, as the efficacy of delivering the program in a remote community setting has not been tested.

Appendix

Definitions

- **Food:** refers to food and non-alcoholic beverages. It excludes breastmilk or breastmilk substitutes.
- **Food environments:** the collective physical, economic, policy and socio-cultural surrounding, opportunities and conditions that influence people’s food and beverage choices and nutritional status.
- **Government:** includes any government departments and, where appropriate, other agencies (i.e. statutory bodies such as offices, commissions, authorities, boards, councils, etc). Plans, strategies or actions by local government are not included, although relevant information can be noted if relevant.
- **Government implementation:** refers to the intentions and plans of the government and actions and policies implemented by the government as well as government funding for implementation of actions undertaken by non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, private companies (including consultants), etc.
- **Healthy/unhealthy food:** Categorisation of foods as healthy / unhealthy are in accordance with the Australian Dietary Guidelines (i.e. core and discretionary foods). Where it is not clear which category to use, categorisation of foods should be informed by rigorous criteria or the use of a nutrient profiling model.
- **Policy actions:** A broad view of “policy” is taken so as to include all government policies, plans, strategies and activities. Evidence of policy implementation takes consideration of the whole policy cycle, from agenda-setting through to policy development, implementation and monitoring. Policy progress may include, *inter alia*:
 - Evidence of commitments from leadership to explore policy options
 - Allocation of responsibility to an individual/team (documented in a work plan, appointment of new position)
 - Establishment of a steering committee, working group, expert panel, etc.
 - Review, audit or scoping study undertaken
 - Consultation processes undertaken
 - Evidence of a policy brief/proposal that has been put forward for consideration
 - Preparation of a regulatory or economic impact assessment, health impact assessment, etc.
 - Regulations / legislation / other published policy details
 - Monitoring data
 - Policy evaluation reports