

**TASKFORCESUBMISSION:** submission

**NAME:** AJ Lester

**POSITION:**

**ORGANISATION:**

**SUBMISSION1:** I am extremely passionate about health and wholeheartedly support the Preventative Health Taskforce's goal of making Australia the healthiest country by 2020. I believe every single strategy outlined in the discussion paper is worthwhile and should be pursued. With that in mind, my first point is that the government must take prompt, strong and comprehensive action in implementing these strategies. The Preventative Health Taskforce has set an ambitious target, which I believe is achievable, but only with a solid commitment to action.

Obviously the faster, stronger and more comprehensive the action, the more effective the Preventative Health Taskforce will be in achieving its goal. At the same time, the more funding it will require. This being the case, I believe that the industries, organisations and individuals responsible for promoting and engaging in unhealthy activities should be the ones to pay for the implementation of preventative health strategies.

My suggestion for making this happen in practice is as follows. In addition to any existing taxes, a significant special tax should be placed on:

- All tobacco products;
- All alcohol products;
- All junk foods, unhealthy fast foods and other refined foods.

All revenues derived from this tax should then be directed toward funding preventative health strategies. Therefore, this will have a dual effect by not only providing resources to promote healthy practices, but also discouraging unhealthy practices by making them much more expensive.

I think it would also be very beneficial to provide tax relief for industries, organisations and individuals that provide preventative health services, especially in the area of encouraging physical activity and combating obesity (for example, gyms, sporting organisations, personal trainers and so on).

I would also like to propose significant subsidies for industries and organisations that grow and supply fresh, organic fruits and vegetables, so that these ultimately become much cheaper for the consumer. Currently, it is far cheaper to live entirely on a diet of junk food, refined and processed products than to buy even small amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables. Until this imbalance is

corrected, it will be difficult to encourage people to adopt healthier eating patterns. Ideally, it should be cheaper to buy fresh, organic fruits and vegetables than the equivalent number of calories of any other kind of food (since everyone agrees that fruits and vegetables are the healthiest foods).

Regarding public education, it would also be extremely beneficial for all organisations that provide health information to let go of outdated nutritional dogma and focus instead on current understanding. For example, most health-related organisations still recommend eating meat and dairy products, even though they have been proven conclusively to have highly damaging effects that far outweigh any health benefits they may provide. Although this can be a controversial subject, the massive volume of high-quality evidence supporting the health benefits of the vegan diet can no longer be ignored (books such as *The China Study* - by T Colin Campbell - alone provide an overwhelmingly strong argument in their own right).

I also think actions already being taken to combat tobacco consumption should be used to address alcohol and junk/fast/refined food consumption as well. Examples include banning all advertising of these products, requiring them to display health warning labels, and developing specific organisations and campaigns to discourage their consumption.

I commend the Preventative Health Taskforce for the work it has done so far, for setting such an ambitious yet absolutely essential target for the future, and for providing the opportunity for the public to comment. I hope this submission provides useful feedback and insights that assist with its decision making processes to follow.

**PRIVACY:** yes

**SUBMIT:** Submit

Hi there

Here is my submission in response to the Preventative Health Taskforce's discussion paper *Australia: The Healthiest Country by 2020*.

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Yours sincerely

AJ Lester