

Response ID ANON-NESK-81JU-S

Submitted to Horizon scan to support the System Strategic Direction for 2023-2026
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About you

What is your name?

Name:
(on behalf of) Dr Mark Hutton

What is your email address?

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Please tick this box if you would like your response to be confidential

What sector do you represent? (Required)

Other (please specify)

If 'other' sector selected, please specify in the text box:
Peak body

What is your organisation?

Organisation name:
Australian Dental Association

Which country are you responding from? (Required)

Australia

If you selected 'other' please specify country:

The field below provides an opportunity to submit any other information about your organisation.

An opportunity to provide any other information about your organisation.:

Thank you for offering the Australian Dental Association (ADA) an opportunity to comment on the Australia New Zealand Food Regulatory System Horizon Scan to support the System Strategic Direction for 2023-2026 (Consultation Paper).

The ADA is the peak representative body for dentists in Australia. Our 17,000 members include dentists who work across both the public and private sector, across 14 specialty areas of practice, in education and research roles, and dentist students currently completing their entry-to-practice qualification.

The primary objective of the ADA is to increase the dental health of the Australian population. We believe a healthy balanced diet is important to achieve optimal oral and general health and excessive sugar consumption and foods with hidden sugars can impact dental health, in-turn affecting general health.

We have advocated in the past for better food labelling including identification of hidden sugars, and enhanced food labelling awareness, to enable consumers to make healthier food choices.

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Consultation Questions

1 Are the trends, issues, risks, and opportunities affecting the broader food system accurately captured in the Horizon Scan?

Yes

If you answered no, which matters have not been captured? :

We include discussion below of diet and nutrition and its interaction with community oral health – a topic not emphasised in the Consultation Paper.

2 To what extent are there activities underway within your organisation, to manage these issues and risks and to leverage these opportunities?

Please provide further detail below:

The ADA's position is that dietary sugars and acids cause damage to teeth. Oral health education should encourage consumption of healthy foods and drinks and discourage consumption of unhealthy foods and drinks. A sugar tax should be applied. Activities within our organisation are ongoing in furtherance of these issues.

3 What opportunities do you consider exist for future work or partnerships, for mutual benefit?

Please provide further detail below:

A bidirectional relationship exists between the food we consume and oral health. Increased sugar intake is linked to dental disease and tooth erosion, which can affect an individual's ability to consume adequate nutrition.

In relation to diet and nutrition and their interaction with community oral health, the ADA considers that:

- Oral health education should encourage individuals to consume no more than 6 teaspoons (24 grams) of free sugar (5% of total energy intake) per day.
- The inclusion of 'total sugars' and 'added sugars' on the Nutrition Information Panel of foods and drinks should be mandatory.
- Education campaigns should educate Australian consumers to understand and interpret food labels to make healthy food choices.
- Health warnings on labels, in advertisements and other promotions should be mandatory for all consumables that significantly contribute to dental disease and tooth erosion.

Would you like to add anything else to your submission?

Please provide further detail below:

While we note that the Consultation Paper's focus is on discussing a food future in the context of seven global megatrends, we note its lack of reference to dental health.

Tooth decay is a common and costly chronic disease. Good dental health contributes to overall health, well-being, and quality of life. In both adults and children, the World Health Organization (WHO) strongly recommends reducing the intake of free sugars to less than 10% of total energy intake. The WHO suggests it is desirable to further reduce the intake of free sugars to below 5% of total energy intake to further decrease the risk of developing tooth decay.

Excessive sugar consumption and unhealthy food can affect dental health via decay and gum disease. High sugar diets, poor oral hygiene, smoking and excessive alcohol intake increase the risk of tooth decay, periodontal (gum) disease, oral infections, oral cancer, and other oral conditions.