

## Media Release

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### Physicians support push to ban junk food advertising aimed at children

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) have welcomed the [push for the Federal Government to ban junk food advertising aimed at children by Independent MP Dr Sophie Scamps](#).

The RACP have been recently advocating for this through the [Kids COVID Catch Up campaign](#) which is [calling for mandatory regulations](#) to restrict the marketing of unhealthy diets to children and young people.

RACP President and Paediatrician Dr Jacqueline Small says, “The widespread advertising of unhealthy foods and drinks is strongly linked to high child obesity rates.

[“In 2017 to 2018, almost one quarter of Australian children aged 5–17 years were overweight or obese.](#) This is a concerning statistic.

“The Federal Government must recognise this and take immediate action to establish formal standards to protect children and young people from unhealthy food marketing.

“The Bill being drafted by Dr Scamps is an important first step to encouraging healthier lifestyle choices from an early age.”

According to a [report by the Obesity Policy Coalition](#), Australian children aged 13-17 years are exposed to almost 100 online promotions of unhealthy food every week.

“Early exposure to junk food marketing influences their preferences, food purchases, and eating habits.

“Pairing this with the pandemic, which has amplified the impacts of obesity, has made it more difficult to promote healthy diet and exercise, which are important measures to prevent obesity.

“COVID-19’s disruptions to their everyday routines have led to not only changes in their eating behaviours, but also their screen behaviours, physical activity, and sleep.

“Ensuring that appropriate regulations are in place is part of creating a healthy environment for children and young people to promote healthy eating and physical activity to set young

people up for a long and healthy life. This will help young people to thrive as we emerge from the pandemic.”

**Learn more about Kids COVID Catch Up here: <https://kidscatchup.org.au/>**

**Media Contact:** Zerene Catacutan, 0422 815 248, zerene.catacutan@essentialmedia.com.au

**About the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP):**

The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of over 18,000 physicians and 8,000 trainee physicians, across Australia and New Zealand. The College represents a broad range of medical specialties including general medicine, paediatrics and child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, infectious diseases, neurology, oncology, public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine, geriatric medicine, and addiction medicine. Beyond the drive for medical excellence, the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the wellbeing of patient. The College offers 61 training pathways. These lead to the award of one of seven qualifications that align with 45 specialist titles recognised by the Medical Board of Australia or allow for registration in nine vocational scopes with the Medical Council of New Zealand.