Policy Position: Healthy Food and Drink Provision

Purpose

This policy outlines Healthway's approach to Healthy Food and Drink Provision.

Background

Healthway is the only State Government agency dedicated to health promotion and primary prevention efforts in Western Australia. As outlined in its *Strategic Plan 2024-2029: Creating a healthier WA together*, Healthway identifies "Promote Healthy Eating" as one of five strategic priority health areas.

Individual behaviour to make healthier choices can thrive in supportive environments with accessible and affordable healthy food and drinks. Evidence suggests that environmental and policy interventions may be among the most effective strategies for creating population-wide improvements in healthy eating[i].

Policy approach

Healthway encourages increasing healthy food and drink availability and decreasing unhealthy options at funded programs, activities and spaces by creating settings that support healthy eating. For organisations that occupy and manage food and drink outlets or provide their own food and drink services, it is a condition of funding that there will be no promotion of sugary drinks and unhealthy food options. Sugary drinks and unhealthy food options may still be sold however, they cannot be prominently displayed for sale or advertised. This condition may also be applied by Healthway in relation to other funded activities.

For event-based projects, funded organisations must also encourage the attendance of food vendors from the Healthier Vendor Guide, or vendors/caterers who are able to offer food and drink options that are consistent with the assessment criteria for inclusion in the Guide.

Healthway can provide support and advice to increase healthy food and drink options. This may include:

- Reviewing food vendor menus to categorise food and drinks as green, amber or red using a traffic light system

- Providing practical advice and support to increase healthy options (green) and decrease unhealthy (red) options
- Providing guidelines for the non-display of sugary drinks e.g. products that should not be on display and suitable alternative drinks for display
- Strategies for engaging food vendors in the Healthier Vendor Guide.

In addition to the above, Healthway will work with supported organisations to identify other strategies to create environments that support healthy eating.

An organisation's ability to offer healthy food and drink options consistent with the traffic light system is taken into consideration in the assessment of funding requests and the implementation of this policy.

Definitions

Traffic Light System - A system of food classification based on food nutrient content and alignment with the Australian Dietary Guidelines[ii]. All food and drinks are classified as Green, Amber or Red. The nutrient criteria and colour coding are based on the Department of Health's Healthy Options WA: Food and Nutrition Policy for WA Health[iii].

Vendors - A provider of food or drinks for public consumption.

Display - Display refers to product placement or location and product accessibility and visibility to the consumer.

Sugary Drinks - Refers to all non-alcoholic water-based beverages with added sugar, including sugar-sweetened soft drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks, sports drinks and cordial. This term does not include milk-based products, 100% fruit juice or non-sugar sweetened beverages (i.e. artificial, non-nutritive or intensely sweetened)[ii].

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Review: This policy will be reviewed in February 2028

[i] Creating Healthy Food and Eating Environments: Policy and Environmental Approaches. Mary021. Healthy Options WA Food and Nutrition Policy. Perth: Western Australian Department of Health. 2008 29:1, 253-272.
[ii] National Health and Medical Research Council (2013). Australian Dietary Guidelines. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council.
[iii] Western Australian Department of Health (2022). Healthy Options WA Food and Nutrition Policy. Perth: Western Australian Department of Health.