

Healthy choices: policy directive food & drink targets

Health services

Health services have a key leadership role in providing healthier food and drink options to support the health and wellbeing of their staff and visitors.

The Victorian Government has introduced the 'Healthy choices: policy directive for Victorian public health services' (the Policy directive) with new targets for the sale and supply of foods and drinks (including the removal of sugary drinks).

The decision to remove sugary drinks from Victorian public health services is based on a large body of evidence of the benefits including:

- the COAG Health Council's Call to action: health sector to lead in healthier food and drink choices for visitors and staff.
- the World Health Organization Action framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies for a healthy diet.

Targets

DRINKS

Vending and in-house retail* food outlets:

- No **RED** drinks to be available or promoted/advertised
- At least 50% **GREEN** drinks, and no more than 20% drinks containing artificial or intense sweeteners (classified **AMBER**) to be available

Catering:

- No **RED** drinks to be provided (with majority of options to be **GREEN**)

FOODS

In-house retail* food outlets:

- At least 50% **GREEN** foods and no more than 20% **RED** foods are available. No **RED** foods to be promoted/advertised.

Vending:

Food only vending machines:

At least 50% **GREEN** foods and no more than 20% **RED** foods are available

Combination food and drink vending machines:

- at least 50% **GREEN** items (combination of foods and drinks)
- no more than 20% **AMBER** artificially sweetened drinks and
- no more than 20% **RED** foods are available (no **RED** drinks allowed).
- no **RED** foods to be promoted/advertised

Catering:

- No **RED** foods to be provided (with majority of options to be **GREEN**)

*You may choose to assess externally managed retail food outlets against the Policy directive. While such assessments are encouraged (which will help you meet the Cancer Plan 2020-24 target), reporting on externally operated outlets is optional.

Who and where

Who does the Policy apply to?

The Policy directive applies to all sites and facilities across public health services including, but not limited to:

- hospitals
- public sector residential aged care services (PSRACS)
- integrated community health services

The Policy directive applies to the following food services within public health services:

- in-house managed retail food outlets, including items purchased by staff and visitors from patient/resident menus
- all vending machines (managed in-house and privately)
- all catering* provided to visitors and staff

* Catering applies to staff procuring food and drinks with health service (government funds) for meetings, functions, and events. This includes occasions such as workshops, conferences, community events, launches, celebrations and ceremonies, as well as client or community education, information, or training programs. It also includes food/drinks provided (free) on the ward or in staff rooms/waiting rooms for staff/visitors (e.g. tea/coffee, water, fruit, biscuits, lollies). Whilst not included in the Policy directive, health services are encouraged to promote and communicate their healthy catering policy to any external groups using their facilities, for example community support groups.



Reporting

Getting ready to report

In 2023 health services will be reporting on both food and drinks. Health services will submit the following to the Progress Tracker reporting tool:

- FoodChecker assessment report/s for their food provision (in-house managed retail outlets and vending)
- An update for their 2022 FoodChecker assessment report/s reflecting their drinks provision (in-house managed food outlets and vending machines)



Food		
Now		From 1 September
<p>Start using FoodChecker to assess your food provision and make the recommended changes to align with the Policy directive.</p> <p>Complete an assessment/s for each internally managed retail food outlet, items purchased by staff and visitors from patient/resident menus and each vending machine layout.</p> <p>TIP: remember to use the Policy directive assessment function in FoodChecker.</p>		<p>Nominate the relevant FoodChecker assessment/s to the Progress Tracker reporting tool and complete the accompanying questions.</p>
Drinks		
Now		From 1 September
<p>Continue using FoodChecker to assess your drink provision.</p> <p>Update your 2022 FoodChecker assessments with any changes to drinks provision for your in-house retail food outlets and/or vending machines.</p> <p>Conduct new FoodChecker assessments for any new drink offerings in vending or in-house retail food outlets.</p> <p>TIP: remember to use the Policy directive assessment function in FoodChecker.</p>		<p>Add updated relevant FoodChecker assessment/s to the Progress Tracker reporting tool and complete accompanying questions</p>

Assessment tips

Assessing your drinks in FoodChecker

Health services will continue to use the dedicated Policy directive assessment function in FoodChecker to assess foods and drinks against the Policy directive targets.

The new FoodChecker Policy directive assessment function allows you to assess your internally managed retail food outlets, vending machines and catering against the Policy directive targets.

The assessment will state if you meet each of the following targets individually:

- Drinks % targets
- Food % targets
- No **RED** drinks promotion
- No **RED** food promotion

For all assessments:

- Ensure FoodChecker assessments have been completed within the last six months
- Only the FoodChecker assessment you choose to submit is visible to the Department of Health
- You can do as many assessments as you want, at any time. Complete at least one assessment for each in-house managed retail food service and one assessment per vending machine layout

In-house retail or patient/resident menus available to staff or visitors:

- Each of your in-house managed retail outlets and patient/resident menus available to staff or visitors needs to be assessed in FoodChecker (using the Policy directive flow).
- Your assessment should include all items available for lunch and snacks throughout the day.
- Breakfast and dinner do not need to be submitted for Policy directive reporting. However, you should still ensure any breakfast and dinner food/drink provision is in accordance with the Policy directive.



Use this approach if your retail outlet or patient/resident menu offers 10 or fewer items over lunch and snacks:	Use this approach if your retail outlet or patient/resident menu offers more than 10 items over lunch and snacks:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess five days of your menu in FoodChecker All five days of your menu assessment should be done in the one FoodChecker assessment. If you have items that appear every day on your menu, enter those items into FoodChecker once for every day they are provided. For example, if you have cheese and crackers on the menu every day, enter this item into the assessment five times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess three days of your menu in FoodChecker Each day of your menu assessment should be done in a separate FoodChecker assessment. E.g. you will submit three separate FoodChecker assessments for your Policy directive reporting. If you have similar items available every day, complete one day menu assessment and use the 'copy and edit' function to copy that assessment, rename it to day two, and make the changes so the menu reflects day two. Tip: this will save time if you offer the same snacks every day, and only change your hot meal options.

Assessing externally managed retail outlets:

Whilst optional, you are strongly encouraged to assess food and drinks provision in your commercially managed retail outlets against the Policy directive and submit this as part of 2023 Department of Health reporting. This will help achieve and monitor progress towards the Victorian Cancer Plan 2020-24 target [1].

Assessing food only and combination vending machines

- You only need one assessment per vending machine layout. (i.e., if you have three vending machines with identical layouts [when fully stocked] you only need one assessment for that layout, not three different assessments).
- Assess vending machines when they are fully stocked. Do not assess the planogram provided by your supplier as it can be different to what is actually in the machine.
- You can search and assess drinks to find out if they contain artificial sweetener.
- You need to include both foods and drinks in combination machine assessments. You can add food to your previous drinks FoodChecker assessments for combination machines.



Assessing catering:

You should assess staff and event catering in order to plan and implement your healthy catering policy, BUT you will not need to submit catering assessments in the 2022 report. Questions will be asked about your organisation's healthy catering policy/processes.



Reporting to the Department of Health

Progress Tracker, the online reporting tool where each health service reports their progress towards meeting the Policy directive is accessible via the HEAS website.

Not only does the Progress Tracker tool serve as a reporting mechanism to the Department of Health, but it is a valuable tool for health services to plan, track, communicate and celebrate implementation of Healthy Choices within their individual organisation.

Please note that only the FoodChecker assessments you choose to submit in this online portal will be visible to the Department of Health.

March to September	September
<p>Use FoodChecker to assess your drink provision.</p> <p>Complete an assessment for each internally managed retail food outlet and each vending machine layout.</p> <p>TIP: remember to use the Policy directive assessment function in FoodChecker.</p>	<p>Add updated relevant FoodChecker assessment/s to the Progress Tracker reporting tool and complete accompanying questions</p>

Support

We are here to support you in assessing your drinks against the Policy directive targets. You can contact one of our dedicated Nutrition Policy Advisors for

information and advice specific to your service's needs.

Contact HEAS via:

Email: heas@nutritionaustralia.org.au
Infoline: 1300 22 52 88