



**THE GEORGE INSTITUTE**  
*for International Health*



## **Progress with reducing salt in the Australian food supply**

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*Affiliated with the University of Sydney*

# Objectives of presentation



- Provide an overview of impact of salt on health and AWASH strategy
- Outline the development of the food industry strategy as an example of participatory health policy development
- Update on progress by the food industry to reduce salt in foods
- Discuss policy implications

# Salt and ill-health



- Required daily salt consumption about 1g/day
- Recommended maximum 6g/day (2,300mg Na) and Suggested Dietary Target 4g (1,600mg Na)
- Salt causes blood pressure to rise and greatly increases the risk of cardiovascular disease
- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of disease burden in Australia
- Blood pressure is the leading cause of chronic disease worldwide

# Australian Salt Intakes

- Recent Australian National Children's Diet and Physical Activity Survey
- Boys – up to >9g salt/day
- Girls – up to >6g salt/day
- No recent measurements for adults
- Estimates between 5-13g/day
- Likely greater intake than children



# Costs and Effects

- Salt reduction identified as more effective strategy for disease prevention than smoking cessation programs (Lancet 2007)
- Projected to be highly cost-effective for all regions of the world (WHO/Lancet 2003)
- A\$10-20 million a year (about 1-2% the sum expended on the present hypertension program) would provide for a gold plated national salt reduction program



# Australian Division of World Action on Salt and Health (AWASH)

**DROP THE SALT!**

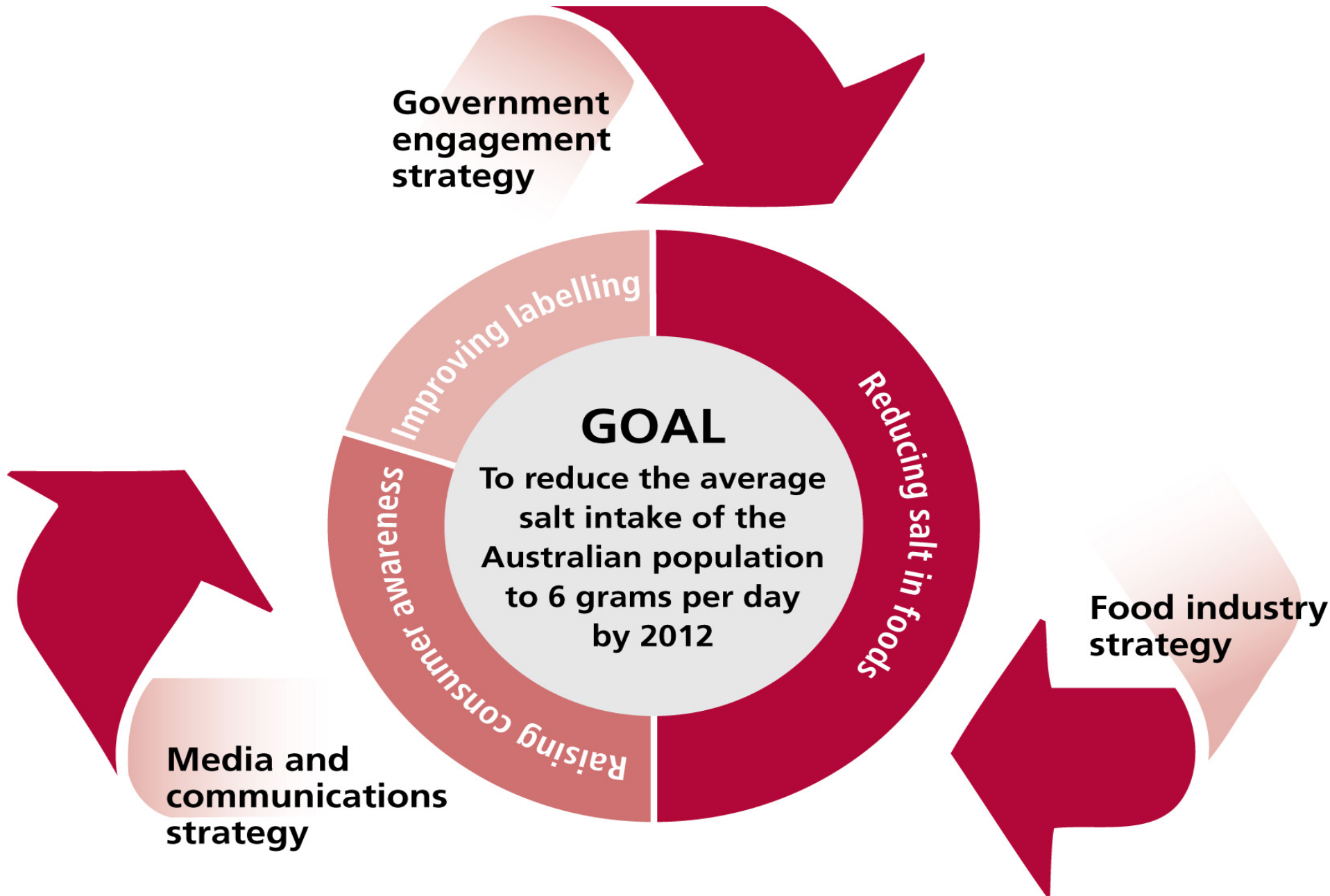
Network of representatives from medical, scientific, industry and consumer organisations who endorse the health benefits of a population wide reduction in dietary salt consumption

## **Governance**

- Secretariat based at George Institute: Bruce Neal, Jacqui Webster, Jane Austin and Caryl Nowson (Deakin University)
- Advisory Group representing industry, consumers, academia and the public sector

# AWASH Goals and Objectives

- **Primary goal is to reduce the average amount of salt consumed by Australians to 6g per day within the next 5 years (by 2012) through:**
- **An average 25% reduction in the salt content of processed foods**
- Increased population knowledge of the benefits of low salt diets
- Clear labelling of foods that makes the salt content immediately apparent



# Food Industry Strategy

- Consulted on proposals for food industry strategy 07/08
- AWASH launched consultation in July 2008.
- Main aim is to reduce salt in foods by 25% over 5 years. Key strategies include:
  - High profile agreement by October 2008
  - **Industry action plans by May 2009 and annual updates**
  - Discussions/consultation on salt targets for key foods during 2009
  - Monitoring and promotion of good practice

# Project Objective and Methods

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- Main objective was to examine food industry action to date with regards to salt reduction
- In March 2009, AWASH requested information from 20 major Australian food companies about their previous salt reduction efforts and any planned future actions for salt reduction.
- A standardised format for response was provided and the support of the Australian Food and Grocery Council was utilised to maximise cooperation.

# Results

Action plan	Other commitment	Sodium data	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coles</li><li>• Smith's</li><li>• Unilever</li><li>• Bakers Delight</li><li>• Oporto</li><li>• McDonald's</li><li>• Yum! Restaurants</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compass Group</li><li>• Heinz</li><li>• Kellogg</li><li>• Lowan</li><li>• Sanitarium</li><li>• Subway</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provided by 33 companies</li><li>• 6 refusals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Goodman Fielder</li><li>• George Weston Foods</li><li>• McCain</li></ul>

# Food Industry Commitment



Unilever

coles



THE HEALTH FOOD COMPANY



George Weston Foods Limited



# Food Industry Action – Example

## Smith's Snackfood Company Salt Reduction Program



### Year 1

Smith's Crinkle Cut Potato Chips – Chicken flavour	<b>29%</b>
Smith's Crinkle Cut Potato Chips – Original flavour	<b>17%</b>
Parker's Pretzels – Minis	<b>23%</b>
Nobby's – peanuts, cashews, beer nuts, mixed nuts	<b>13%</b>

### Year 2

Smith's Crinkle Cut Potato Chips – Salt & Vinegar	<b>15%</b>
Smith's Selections Thinly Cut Potato Chips – Sour Cream Onion	<b>18%</b>
RRD Lime Black Pepper	<b>23%</b>
Doritos Sweet Chilli Sour Cream	<b>15%</b>

# Food Industry Action – Example

## Yum! Restaurants Salt Reduction Commitment



- Yum! has targeted a salt reduction of 10% across all chicken products on the KFC menu and 20% on chips. They are testing products that meet these targets in market and intend to roll this out Nationally by the end of 2009. This change will result in the removal of in excess of **70,000kg** of salt from the Australian diet.
- Yum! is actively exploring opportunities to extend this salt reduction on both brands, and through the use of new technology, aim to be testing further significant salt reductions with consumers at the start of 2010.
- The Yum! goal for the future is to support customers to lower their salt consumption, by offering **meals from the core menu** that have **less than 1000mg of sodium**.

# Summary of Progress to Date

**May 2007** - Commitments from 10 organisations: 1 trade association, 6 manufacturers, 1 supermarket, 2 quick food service sector companies

**January 2008** - Commitments from 10 organisations: 1 trade association, 6 manufacturers, 1 supermarket, 2 quick food service Sector companies

**January 2009** - Commitments from 11 organisations (same as previous year plus Subway Systems Australia)

**May 2009** - Commitments from 19 Organisations: 1 trade association, 12 manufacturers, 1 supermarket, 3 quickfood service sector companies

# What does this add up to?

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- We need to know whether there has been an actual reduction in salt levels in foods, both within individual food categories and across the whole spectrum.

# AWASH Sodium Database

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<b>Food Category</b>	<b>Percent of daily salt intake from processed foods</b>
Cereals and cereal products	32
Cereal-based products and dishes	17
Meat, poultry and game products and dishes	21
Milk products and dishes	5
Savoury sauces and condiments	8
All other foods	17

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	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Sub-category 1	Brand name	Product title	Size	Serving size	Sodium (mg/serve)	Sodium (mg/100g/mL)
2	Fruit bread	Tip Top	Fruit Loaf	650g	72.5	163	224.83
3	Fruit bread	BI-LO	Fruit Bread Sliced	560g	62.5	155	250
4	Fruit bread	Village Green	Raisin Loaf	560g	62.5	155	250
5	Fruit bread	MightySoft	Cafe Style Extra Thick Fruit Loaf	900g	75	188	250.67
6	Fruit bread	The Good Stuff Bakery	Fruit And Grain	800g	57	165	289.47
7	Fruit bread	MightySoft	Thick Sliced Raisin Toast	600g	70.5	212	300
8	Fruit bread	MightySoft	Fruit 'n' Spice	650g	76.5	230	300.65
9	Fruit bread	Tip Top	Retreats Raisin Toast	520g	65	204	313.85
10	Fruit bread	Burgen	Sliced Fruit & Muesli Bread	700g	83	274	330
11	Fruit bread	Monty's Continental Bakery	Dutch Fruit Loaf	450g	45	495	1100
12	Fruit bread	Monty's Continental Bakery	Dutch Fruit Buns	250g	62.5	725	1160
13	Fruit bread	Monty's Continental Bakery	Apricot Fruit Loaf	450g	45	523	1162.22
14	Fruit bread	Monty's Continental Bakery	Sliced Fruit Bread	680g	34	399	1173.53
15	Fruit bread	Monty's Continental Bakery	Cinnamon Fruit Loaf	450g	45	548	1217.78
16	Gluten-free	Diego's	White Corn Tortillas	168g	56	46	83
17	Gluten-free	Country Life Bakery	Low GI Gluten Free Bread	510g	73	183	250
18	Gluten-free	Moores	Yeast Free Gluten & Wheat Free	600g	100	310	310
19	Gluten-free	Country Life Bakery	Gluten Free Fruit	510g	73	240	330
20	Gluten-free	Country Life Bakery	Gluten Free Bread	510g	73	277	380
21	Gluten-free	Country Life Bakery	Gluten Free Multigrain	510g	73	285	390
22	Gluten-free	Moores	Gluten And Wheat Free Yeast Free Wh	600g	100	670	670
23	Gluten-free	Brighterlife Wheatfree Foods	Bendy Bread	460g	40	303.2	758
24	Gluten-free	Orgran	Gluten Free Alternative Grain Wholemea	450g	26.5	290	1100
25	Mixed grain	Mountain Bread & Food	Mountain Rye Bread - Light Rye Wraps	200g	25	50	200
26	Mixed grain	Mountain Bread & Food	Mountain Barley Bread - Light Barley W	200g	25	52.5	210
27	Mixed grain	Moores	Yeast Free Stoneground Rye Bread	600g	68	171	251
28	Mixed grain	Molenberg Swiss Bake	Wholegrain	750g	75	233	311
29	Mixed grain	King Henry's Bakehouse	Rye Bread - Made Using 100% Rye Flo	900g	100	320	320
30	Mixed grain	Golden Hearth	Heavy Wholegrain Organic Bread	900g	100	340	340
31	Mixed grain	The Good Stuff Bakery	Kibbled Wheat Sour Dough Rye	800g	89	320	359.55
32	Mixed grain	Vogel's	Original Mixed Grain	700g	88	317	360
33	Mixed grain	Helga's	Continental Bakehouse - Sunflower, Hor	750g	83.5	305	365.26

# Development of Salt Targets for Industry

## Development of product-specific targets for salt levels in key food categories

- The UK Food Standards Agency has developed salt reduction targets for 80 food categories
- Developed in consultation with industry
- Such targets for Australia could draw on the UK targets as well as build on existing Australian criteria (e.g. NHF)
- At two recent symposiums, there was clear agreement on need for this from key stakeholders including industry and government representatives

# Policy Implications I - Industry

- With the majority of salt in the Australian diet coming from processed foods, the food industry has a major role to play in reducing population salt intakes
- Whilst some key players in the food industry have taken some action to reduce salt, there is still huge scope for further action
- The government needs to take leadership by working with the food industry to develop category-specific salt targets for key product categories



# Policy Implications II – Government

- Monitoring of salt levels in foods is crucial to identify salt reduction progress and to examine areas for further action
- Planned national dietary survey for adults should include accurate assessment of sodium intakes
- Federal and state governments should ensure that social marketing campaigns to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and decrease consumption of processed foods are integrated
- There needs to be a clearer system for labelling foods so that the salt content is immediately apparent



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