

Australian Medical Association Limited

ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604
Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499
Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



Transcript:

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, Channel 9 'TODAY' Show
Monday 8 January 2018

Subject:

AMA proposal for a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages; nutrition

BRENTON RAGLESS: The Australian Medical Association is waging a war on junk food, renewing calls for a tax on sugary drinks and a crackdown on advertising targeting children.

President of the AMA, Dr Michael Gannon, joins us this morning. Good morning, Dr Gannon, thanks for joining us. Talk us through the AMA's proposal.

MICHAEL GANNON: Well, you have rightly pointed out that near the centre of this proposal is for a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages. These are a significant contributor to the obesity epidemic we see in society.

This, in turn, has an impact causing substantial chronic health costs to the health system, both in the short term and the long term. We see this measure as one of a number of measures to reduce the obesity crisis.

BRENTON RAGLESS: And the Government has shown no interest in a sugar tax. What evidence is there that, say, a tax on soft drinks will actually help to curb the obesity crisis?

MICHAEL GANNON: Well, it has been tried in a number of countries around the world, and it acts as a deterrent factor.

One of the arguments I have heard from the Government against the measure is that this will add a burden to families. The truth is we want to change behaviours and, over time, we have to.

Now, I will make the comparison with the war on tobacco.

One important distinction is we're talking about products that do have a safe dose. If people from time to time want to consume one of these beverages, people will continue to consume highly processed foods, fast foods, that's alright. But what we want to build in is price signals that will act as a deterrent to reduce the proportion of people's calories that they get from these nutrition-poor foods.

BRENTON RAGLESS: Dr Michael Gannon, thanks for your time this morning. We appreciate it.

SYLVIA JEFFREYS: It's a really divisive and interesting debate in every household, I think, in the country at the moment. So let us know your thoughts at home. Is it worth taxing sugary drinks for the sake of bringing down the obesity levels?

BRENTON RAGLESS: And not just that, perhaps lollies and other things like that as well.

SYLVIA JEFFREYS: Yeah. Where does it start and where does it end? Let us know your thoughts on Facebook.

8 January 2018

CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: http://twitter.com/ama_media

Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>

Follow *Australian Medicine* on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/amaausmed>

Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>