

salt and trans-fats in many products," chief executive Kate Carnell said.

With almost a quarter of Australian children overweight or obese, food manufacturers face a crackdown on seductive junk food advertising to kids.

The ad ban would initially be voluntary. But the Prime Minister's hand-picked expert group called for legislation within four years if self-regulation fails.

In classrooms, the report says children should sit for shorter periods between physical activity breaks.

And workplaces may become fitness hubs, with possible rewards for employers offering health programs.

Fringe-benefits tax changes have been mooted to reward employers who offer exercise programs or nutrition classes.

Compulsory spending on workplace health could also be required as a proportion of payroll expenses.

Key points of national preventative health tasks

Obesity

- Consider grants or tax incentives for employers who provide health programs at work
- Incorporate physical education into new national curriculum
- No junk-food ads and promotions (eg, toy give-aways) before 9pm (to start within four years)
- Consider tax incentives for healthy food
- Encourage food manufacturers to cut down salt, sugar and fat content in products

Smoking

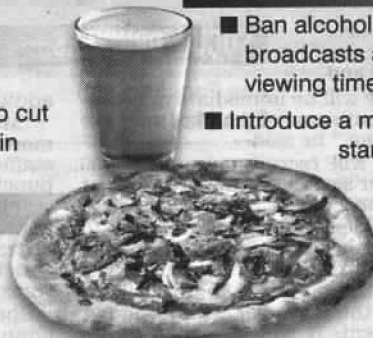
- Raise price of cigarettes to \$20 a pack within three years
- Investigate legal action

against tobacco companies to recoup health costs

- Plain packaging for all tobacco products (except for health warnings)
- Make smoking a classifiable element in movies
- Restrict the number and type of outlets that can sell cigarettes

Alcohol

- Ban alcohol advertising from sports broadcasts and young people's viewing times
- Introduce a minimum floor price for a standard drink
- Tax beverages on volume of pure alcohol
- National laws on policing of alcohol offences



Taskforce targets:

- Halt and reverse the rise in obesity
- Reduce the number of smokers from one in six adults to one in 10 adults or fewer
- Cut short-term risky drinking rates from: **20 per cent to 14 per cent**
- Cut long-term risky drinking rates from: **10 per cent to 7 per cent**
- Reduce secondary school drinking rates from: **31 per cent to 21 per cent**
- Close the life expectancy gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians

Fit workers mean better business

EMPLOYEES

EVERY lunchtime, fitness trainer Todd King encourages workers out of their office chairs and into a pair of running shoes to participate in training sessions supported by their employer.

He welcomed recommendations to implement comprehensive health programs in workplaces, saying it would provide a boost to productivity as well as the fitness of employees.

"People work better when they are fit. They are more mentally alert, as well as the physical benefits," said Mr King, director of corporate training company Group Exercise Therapy.

He said offering financial incentives to employers to keep workers healthy would pay dividends for the companies involved, as well as for the Australian health system.

"It is a really good team-building exercise," he said.



Getting fit: office workers do some resistance training. Picture: FIONA HAMILTON

Smokers to pay a high price for habit

CIGARETTES

Ben Packham

CIGARETTES would rise to \$20 a packet within three years under the national health plan, bringing Australia into line with other nations such as Britain and Ireland.

"Increasing prices is one of the most effective measures that government can take to reduce tobacco consumption," the Preventative Health Taskforce said.

But the Government is yet to endorse the proposal, preferring to wait for a major inquiry into the nation's tax system.

"I don't intend to tip my hand one way or the other," Treasurer Wayne Swan said.

"These are all important matters that are being considered through the Henry Review."

Tobacco giant British American Tobacco urged the Government to be mindful of

smokers "who manage a budget and have made an informed choice to smoke".

But the taskforce said there should be no mercy for tobacco companies, urging legal action against them to recover money for health costs.

It also called for a ban on smoking in prisons, which could cause a backlash from nicotine-addicted inmates.

And children could be banned from seeing films starring renowned smokers Brad Pitt and Russell Crowe under a proposal to make smoking a classifiable element under censorship rules.