



# Flab tax may be a fat lot of good

HEALTH advocates are renewing calls for a "fat tax" in Australia, after Denmark became the first country in the world to introduce one.

Jane Martin, the senior adviser with pressure group Obesity Policy Coalition, said a fat tax was needed to curb rising obesity rates.

Six in 10 Australian adults, and one in four children, are overweight or obese.

"We think unhealthy foods should be taxed and the funds raised used to subsidise healthy food for people on a low income," Ms Martin said.

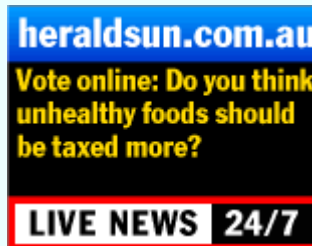
**Marianne Betts**  
health reporter

Price was an important factor in food-buying decisions, and it was of concern that the cost of healthy foods was rising faster than the cost of the alternatives, she said.

"We know price plays a role in our decisions, and taxes are used in alcohol and tobacco sales to change people's behaviours," she said.

"It would be interesting to see the impact the fat tax would have in Denmark."

A tax on junk food was recommended by the National



Preventative Health Taskforce, but the Government failed to respond to it, Ms Martin said. It was ignored in last year's Henry Tax Review and was not on the agenda at this week's tax forum in Canberra.

"It's been avoided, really ... pushed sideways, and it's a concern because other countries are looking at this," Ms Martin said.

Public health expert Dr Ken Harvey, of La Trobe University, said a societal approach was needed to fight the obesity problem and its health consequences.

A spokesman for federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon said the Government was doing more to tackle obesity than any other administration.

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