



local fare

with Alice Coomans

FROM food labelling last week to advertising junk food to kids this week – reports have got the food industry talking in the lead up to Christmas.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) entered the fray this week, saying it was not clear whether two initiatives introduced 18 months ago by the food industry have reduced the amount of junk-food ads kids see on television.

Advertising to children has been a contentious topic for some time and the report looked at whether the industry's voluntary code had helped reduce the impact of ads on children's food

choices, the amount of food advertising, and misleading claims about the health benefits of food products.

"At this stage it appears to the ACMA that the community concerns flagged with the ACMA in 2007-09 remain," the report released on Wednesday states.

Naturally, opponents of junk-food advertising jumped on the finding. Obesity Policy Coalition spokeswoman Jane Martin said the federal government was failing to protect children.

"The report highlights the inadequacy of self-regulation," she told AAP.

She said programs such as It's A Knockout were full of junk food advertising aimed at kids,

but could escape regulation under the current system.

"It's not just the advertising within the breaks, but that program is full of marketing for McDonald's – it's got the branding, and it's even got the hosts saying, 'I'm lovin' it,'" Ms Martin said.

This discussion brings us back to the question of whether it is really advertising that is the problem or whether parents need to take control of what their kids watch and eat. Local Fare would like to hear from you. Do you think there is still too much junk-food advertising aimed at kids? Log onto www.westernadvocate.com.au/advertising and leave a comment.