

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Sugar reformulation a FANTasy and further proof a tax on sugary drinks is needed

Revelations in media reports today that the sugar content in some sugary drinks has increased, are further proof of the need for a tax on sugary drinks.

Media reports today revealed that the sugar content in popular soft drink Fanta had increased by 60 per cent just a few years after it was reduced, despite industry assurances that sugary drinks are being reformulated with less sugar.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson, who today launched the AMA's federal budget submission arguing for a tax on sugary drinks, said consumers have been sold a story about reformulation, only to discover that sugar amounts had increased in some drinks — despite being advertised as the opposite.

"This is further evidence of the need for a tax on sugary drinks to encourage manufacturers to prioritise true reformulation efforts and provide consumers with healthier options," Professor Robson said.

"As today's news shows, consumers have been bombarded with claims of reduced sugar when the sugar amount in some products has actually increased! How are consumers to know this is happening, when even the big retailers' websites don't have the correct information or know the sugar has been secretly increased.

"The industry's sugar reduction pledge to reformulate isn't working. That's because it's voluntary, and its impact is severely limited with only four manufacturers signing up."

Professor Robson said the AMA's budget submission includes details on the evidence showing sugar taxes have been proven to be effective, with more than 100 countries and jurisdictions implementing some form of tax on sugary drinks.

"Our analysis shows a 20 per cent health levy on sugary drinks could raise around \$1 billion each year. This is money that could be invested into crucial health promotion campaigns, reducing pressure on our stretched health system.

"Research also shows there could be 4,400 fewer cases of heart disease, 16,000 fewer cases of type 2 diabetes, and 1,100 fewer strokes over 25 years if government takes this step."

The AMA recently joined leaders from the Rethink Sugary Drinks alliance, including the Cancer Council, Heart Foundation, Food for Health Alliance and Australian Dental Association, to [call for a tax on the manufacturers of sugary drinks](#).

"This policy really is a no brainer — it would raise vital funds for preventive health and protect Australians' health by decreasing the risk of diseases linked to excess weight like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and some cancers," Professor Robson said.

[Read the AMA's latest report on a sugar tax](#)

[Read the AMA's budget submission that includes the call for a sugar tax: A health system for all](#)

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