

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

October 29, 2007 Monday
First Edition

Push to ban soft drink ads for young

BYLINE: Kelly Burke Consumer Affairs Reporter

SECTION: NEWS AND FEATURES; Pg. 4

LENGTH: 335 words

A GLOBAL campaign against leading soft drink makers will be launched in Sydney today, urging governments to ban advertising sugary drinks to children, restrict sponsorship rules and impose a "fitness and nutrition" tax.

Marking the opening of the four-day Consumers International Congress, the coalition of consumer advocacy and watchdog groups say the **Dump Soda** campaign has Coca-Cola and PepsiCo firmly in its sights.

Bruce Silverglade, the legal director of the US Centre for Science in the Public Interest, who arrived in Sydney at the weekend, said Coca-Cola and PepsiCo had "flooded the global market with liquid candy", and the modest reforms achieved in some countries resulted from political pressure.

The centre, with the International Association of Consumer Food Organisations, Corporate Accountability International, Safe Food International and a host of consumer groups, is calling for a total media and merchandising ban on soft drinks to children aged under 16.

It also wants "blind" trusts created through which drink manufacturers must lodge sponsorship money, as well as a tax on sugared beverages, to be used by governments to fund nutrition education programs, or subsidise the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables.

But Coca-Cola's South Pacific president, Gareth Edgecombe, has accused campaign organisers of playing a "factually flexible blame game" aimed at an easy target.

Coca-Cola stopped promoting products to children under 12 in 2000 and at the start of 2004 had voluntarily withdrawn sparkling drinks with sugar content from primary schools. "Parents have told us they want education, not dictation," Mr Edgecombe said.

Tony Gentile, the chief executive of the Australian Beverages Council, said the campaign showed Americans "haven't got a clue about what's happening in Australia". Manufacturers adopted further restrictions on selling and marketing to primary school children last year, he said. The reforms were being audited by Food & Nutrition Australia, with a report due next month.

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AAP Newsfeed

October 29, 2007 Monday 2:06 PM AEST

FED: Call to ban soft drink marketing to under-16s

SECTION: DOMESTIC NEWS

LENGTH: 273 words

DATELINE: SYDNEY Oct 29

A congress of world consumer rights advocates meeting in Sydney is calling for a ban on all soft drink marketing to children under 16.

Anti-soft drink campaigner Bruce Silverglade, from the US Centre for Science in the Public Interest, is spearheading the Global Dump Soda Campaign.

Soft drink makers had "flooded the global market with liquid candy" that was feeding childhood obesity worldwide, said Mr Silverglade, who is in Sydney for the Consumers International World Congress.

The Global Dump Soda Campaign has joined the congress in calling today for a total media and merchandising ban on soft drinks to children aged under 16.

The congress wants soft drink companies to "cease the marketing of all sugar-laden beverages to children under 16, including print and broadcast advertising, product placement, the internet, mobile phones, athletic sponsorship, signage, packaging promotions, merchandising and other means".

The chief executive of the Australian Beverages Council, Tony Gentile, says the Dump Soda campaigners have missed the point.

"There has been a one per cent decrease in sugar-sweetened beverages for every year for the past seven years, and a one per cent increase for non-sugar sweetened beverages every year over the same time period," News Limited quoted Mr Gentile as saying.

He said companies were reacting to customer demands.

Mr Gentile said soft drinks had not been marketed to primary school aged children in Australia for 10 to 15 years.

"If you haven't taught your children to make rational decisions by the time they leave primary school, you have really lost the battle," he said.

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Herald Sun (Australia)

October 29, 2007 Monday
FIRST Edition

Call to go hard on soft drinks for kids

BYLINE: Holly Ife

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 6

LENGTH: 251 words

ALL soft-drink marketing to children under 16 should be banned, according to an international coalition of consumer organisations.

The groups, meeting this week at the Consumers International world congress in Sydney, have developed a global "**Dump Soda**" campaign to highlight the link between sugary soft drinks and childhood obesity.

The campaign aims to convince governments to ban the marketing of high-kilojoule drinks to children under 16.

It's also pushing for a small tax on soft drinks to support government-funded physical education programs and subsidised fruit and vegetables.

"It is no news to anyone that there is a global childhood obesity epidemic and that one of the contributors worldwide is soft drinks," said group organiser Bruce Silverglade, legal director of the US-based Centre for Science in the Public Interest.

But chief executive of the Australian Beverages Council Tony Gentile said the "**Dump Soda**" campaigners had "missed the whole point".

"There has been a 1 per cent decrease in sugar-sweetened beverages for every year for the past seven years, and a 1 per cent increase for non-sugar sweetened beverages every year over the same time period," Mr Gentile said. He said companies were reacting to customer demands.

Mr Gentile said soft drinks had not been marketed to primary-school-aged children in Australia for 10 to 15 years.

"If you haven't taught your children to make rational decisions by the time they leave primary school, you have really lost the battle," he said.

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ABC Premium News (Australia)

October 29, 2007 Monday 1:01 PM AEST

Consumer groups push for tighter junk food restrictions

LENGTH: 241 words

A consumer group is calling on all political parties to commit to greater restrictions on the marketing of junk food to children before the federal election.

The increase in global obesity rates is one of the major issues being discussed at an international consumers conference in Sydney this week.

The Australian consumers organisation CHOICE says the problem will also be one of the biggest challenges for the next federal government.

Spokeswoman Clare Hughes says political parties should commit to changes such as the removal of vending machines from schools, compulsory front-of-package labelling, and increased regulation of junk food advertising.

CHOICE has also criticised Labor for backing down on plans to restrict the use of movie and television characters in junk food advertising.

"The Australian Communication and Media Authority is reviewing the children's television standards. They currently don't go far enough," she said.

Worldwide consumer groups are also launching the '[dump soda](#)' campaign to increase Government regulation of soft drink.

Bruce Silverglade from the Centre for Science in the Public Interest in the United States says parents also need to be warned.

"Soft drinks are a nutritional waste, they are essentially liquid candy," he said.

"The first step of course is informing parents and children that soft drinks have as many calories as candy... so they shouldn't really be used to quench thirst in the place of water."

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ABC Premium News (Australia)

October 29, 2007 Monday 11:02 AM AEST

Companies to get Bad Product Awards

LENGTH: 258 words

Consumer groups say they are using a conference in Sydney today to reveal how some of the world's best-known companies have abused consumer rights.

The Consumers International Conference is examining the marketing practices of drug companies, links between food marketing and obesity and consumer debt.

The four-day conference brings together lobby groups from around 100 countries and includes delegates from 220 consumer groups.

Choice spokesman Christopher Zinn says Bad Product Awards will be given out to companies who have ignored their responsibilities to consumers.

"Companies who have really breached consumer rights and protection with some of the products they put out and these are going to be highlighted in a very public and global way," he said.

Mr Zinn says most consumers want companies to be more transparent "in terms of manufacturing, in terms of conditions of how that happens and the labels of what's contained in products".

The conference is also looking at the quantities of soft drink consumed by children, announcing a new global **'Dump Soda'** campaign.

Bruce Silverglade from the US Centre for Science in the Public Interest says the campaign is aimed at increasing Government regulation of soft drink.

But he says parents also need to be warned.

"Soft drinks are a nutritional waste, they are essentially liquid candy," he said.

"I think the first step is informing parents and children that soft drinks have as many calories as candy, they are liquid candy and so they shouldn't really be used to quench thirst in the place of water."

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Subject: MediaPost.com Article: Marketers Respond to 'Global Dump Soda Campaign'
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Marketers Respond to 'Global Dump Soda Campaign'

Karlene Lukovitz

Beverage marketing associations are firing back in response to a new "Global Dump Soda Campaign" spearheaded by the U.S.-based Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) and the International Association of Consumer Food Organizations.

The campaign, also supported by international consumer groups such as Corporate Accountability International and Safe Food International, is "aimed at transnational giants Coca-Cola and PepsiCo" and seeks to "call attention to the marketing of sugary soft drinks and other high-calorie beverages linked to the worldwide childhood obesity crisis," according to CSPI's announcement.

The campaign, being kicked off this week at the Consumers International Congress in Sydney, Australia, calls on government officials around the world to require that companies cease all marketing--including advertising, sponsorships and product placements in all media--of "sugar-laden" beverages to children under age 16.

It also calls for ceasing sales of all sweetened beverages, including sports drinks and fruit-flavored beverages and teas, in all public and private elementary, middle and high schools; limiting sponsorships promoting physical activity and health to contributions to blind trusts overseen by government agencies, for use in programs that do not feature corporate logos or brands; establishing a "modest" value-added tax on soft drinks (to be used by governments for physical activity and nutrition education programs and subsidizing the costs of fruits and vegetables); increasing promotion of "new, lower-sugar products," and selling existing high-sugar products in smaller portions.

According to CSPI Legal Director Bruce Silverglade, these demands are based on recommendations made by the World Health Organization in its 2004 "Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health"--which, he says, are also being used as a "blueprint" for nutrition initiatives by governments in a growing number of countries.

Coca-Cola and PepsiCo did not respond directly to the Drop Soda salvo, but Coca-Cola referred press to an official statement from the American Beverage Association (ABA). The ABA statement maintains that CSPI "is clearly more show than substance," and labels the Dump Soda campaign "another attempt by the CSPI to blame one product for a complex problem.

"Rather than pointing a finger at industry, it would be more effective if CSPI and its global counterparts worked on comprehensive solutions to bring about meaningful results," ABA argues, adding that the U.S. beverage industry "agrees that childhood obesity is a serious global issue" and has "stepped up to be a part of the solution" through various initiatives.

In the U.S., these include partnering with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation to develop national School Beverage Guidelines that remove "full-calorie" soft drinks from all schools and also cap beverage calories and portion sizes. In the first year of this agreement's three-year implementation plan, calories from beverages shipped to schools have declined by 41% and shipments of full-calorie soft drinks by 45%, and 35% of school contracts are in compliance, according to ABA.

The association also points out that in the U.S., the major beverage companies do not advertise full-calorie soft drinks

on TV shows aimed primarily at children under 12, and follow the guidelines of the Children's Advertising Review Unit of the Council of Better Business Bureaus (CBBB).

Some beverage marketers, including Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, have also signed on to the CBBB's new Children's Food and Beverage Initiative, which aims to increase the percentage of advertising for products that meet specific nutrition standards for children under 12, and ad messages that encourage good nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

Overall sales of soft drinks in the U.S. (excluding Wal-Mart) declined by 3.8% last year, according to IRI/AC Nielsen data.

"Though parents seem to be drinking soft drinks at about the same levels, there's no doubt that the percentage of children drinking them has been declining for about the past 10 years," says Harry Balzer, executive vice president for market research firm NPD Group. "It all comes down to what consumers do. Mothers are clearly concerned about what their children are consuming, and acting on this."

Outside the U.S., the Australian Beverages Council Ltd. issued a statement calling the Global Dump Soda Campaign a "PR nonsense exercise that does not take into account the commitments and progress already made by the beverage industry in Australia, Europe and North America." Tony Gentile, chief executive of the council, cited the "series of commitments" by the country's beverage industry already addressing "the role of non-alcoholic beverages and childhood obesity," which have been commended by the government and the country's health department.

Silverglade of CSPI--which last year dropped a planned lawsuit against major beverage makers in the U.S. after the voluntary agreement to phase sugar-containing soft drinks out of schools was reached, with the involvement of the William J. Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association--maintains that the Global Drop Soda Campaign is needed to ensure that multinational companies engage in best practices consistently throughout the world.

"These companies claim to have global commitments, but have really only responded in bits and pieces, in countries where there have been pressures to act in specific areas, such as labeling and marketing," he contends.

For instance, Silverglade says, "in Europe and most of the rest of the world," companies have agreed to take soft drinks out of primary and secondary schools, but not high schools; and whereas marketers do not advertise soft drinks to children under age 12 in the U.S., the agreed-upon standard in the U.K. calls for not advertising to children under age 16.

Furthermore, he maintains, multinationals are increasing marketing of traditional soft drinks to other parts of the world to make up for losses in this segment in the U.S.

In the U.S., he says, "the good news is that soft drink sales have been declining over the last few years, but the bad news is that sales of other drinks still high in calories, like energy drinks and diluted fruit juices, are being substituted."