

# Emerging Health Policy Research Conference 2017

## Abstract Submission

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### Presenters Details

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#### Short Biography of presenter:

Emma is a dietitian and nutritionist, and a PhD candidate at The University of Sydney. Her research is focused on the policy aspects for the early prevention of childhood obesity. Her project is part of the NHMRC-funded Centre for Research Excellence of the Early Prevention of Obesity in Childhood.

### Presentation Details

**Presentation Title:** Creating a policy mapping tool for early childhood obesity prevention in Australian states and territories

**Keywords:** obesity prevention, early childhood, policy mapping

### Research Details

#### Background:

Childhood obesity is an internationally recognised public health problem. The prevention of obesity is complex, it requires a systematic approach across all sectors of government. Policy represents the intention of a government to act in a particular area. Currently, there is no comprehensive tool to assess childhood obesity prevention policies in an Australian context.

#### Research Question:

How can obesity prevention policies be understood across a system of government?

#### Methodology:

An Australian-specific tool was developed to identify policies at the state/ territory level – including options which would impact on children in the early years, inclusive of environmental considerations. A framework was used to identify upstream, midstream and downstream action areas relevant for different levels of Australian government. Then

evidence reviews undertaken for an Australian context were used to identify policy options available for Australian states and territories. This tool was applied to New South Wales as a case study.

**Findings:**

New South Wales has strong leadership on childhood obesity, with the Premier's Priority. Policies focused on families and settings were particularly strong. This mapping also identified gaps and possible points of leverage to impact on childhood obesity in New South Wales were identified, many of these were in the food policy space. At the same time there is more consistent traction with cross-sectoral action in the physical activity and built environment space.

**Policy Implications:**

The developed tool is evidence-based and contextually appropriate for Australian states and territories. Policy mapping is a useful tool for identifying gaps in policy and focusing efforts for achieving common goals.

**N.B. All presenters will be asked to include a final slide in their presentations that summarises the policy recommendations and/or implications that can be drawn from the research presented.**