



the parents jury

Your voice on food and activity

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Global  
Dump Soft Drinks  
Campaign

Monday 10 December 2007

## Parents urge soft drink companies to stop targeting children

The Parents Jury's "Trial by Jury" panel has returned a resounding guilty verdict against Coca-Cola's marketing campaign that promotes Coca-Cola as the perfect accompaniment to the family dinner. The Trial by Jury panel believes this marketing campaign is seriously undermining the healthy eating messages parents are trying hard to give to their children.

In light of parents' concerns regarding the promotion and consumption of sugary soft drinks by children, The Parents Jury has joined forces this month with the *Global Dump Soft Drinks Campaign*. The international campaign is calling on governments and beverage companies around the world to act on ceasing the marketing of sugary soft drinks to children aged under 16.

The Parents Jury is urging both the Australian Federal and state and territory governments, as well as the beverage industry to help reverse the rapidly escalating childhood obesity trend by banning the marketing of sweetened beverages to children and removing them from all primary and secondary school environments across the country.

The Coca-Cola ad found guilty by the Trial by Jury panel, promotes Coca-Cola as the perfect drink to have with the family meal saying "Meals come alive on the Coca-Cola side of life". The TV ad shows a family sitting down for a meal together with a bottle of Coke as the main drink. (You can view the ad at <http://www.coca-cola.com.au/meals/>)

Justine Hodge of The Parents Jury says the key message the ad is giving to families contradicts the health messages being given out by health officials and governments across the world.

"The over consumption of soft drinks has been clearly associated with rising levels of childhood overweight and obesity. Children should be encouraged to drink water with their meals, not energy dense sugary soft drinks that only add unnecessary kilojoules and are also highly detrimental to dental health."

"The Parents Jury urges Coca-Cola Amatil and other soft drink companies to stop this type of unhealthy marketing targeting children and families. It is time for these large companies to demonstrate that they are serious about their commitment to public health and do their bit to reverse unhealthy dietary trends that are taking a tragic human and economic toll on consumers world-wide," Ms Hodge said.

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The Parents Jury is supported by:



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MEDIA RELEASE



“The food industry keeps saying that it wants to be part of the solution for childhood and adolescent obesity, but this shows that some of the large companies are still clearly part of the problem.”

Marketing strategies frequently used to target children include print and broadcast advertising, product placement, the internet, mobile phones, sports sponsorship, outdoor advertising, packaging promotions and merchandising. Soft drinks are also still widely consumed in schools despite some states implementing canteen and vending machine bans.

The Parents Jury spokesperson and mother of two Shalani McCray, says governments should be supporting parents by prohibiting the sale and distribution of all types of sugary drinks across the whole school environment.

“It’s not good enough to only ban the selling of drinks in the school canteen, there needs to be a blanket ban on the availability of all soft drinks and other sugary drinks in Australian schools,” she said.

Energy dense, high sugar snacks and drinks still dominate the menu in many school canteens and vending machines. Soft drinks are also often consumed by children at school as part of sports activities and other school events.

“When unhealthy foods and drinks are regularly and readily available in school canteens, vending machines, classroom rewards and sporting activities it undermines the “healthy eating” messages of the school curriculum and the family,” Shalani said.

**The Parents Jury** is a web-based forum of 3,000 parents who want to voice their views and collectively advocate for the improvement of children's food and physical activity environments. Trial by Jury campaign is an opportunity for parents to fight back and speak out about the food marketing campaigns they really hate. Membership of The Parents Jury is free and open to all Australian parents, grandparents and guardians of children aged under 18 years of age. [www.parentsjury.org.au](http://www.parentsjury.org.au)

**Trial by Jury** is a regular activity run by The Parents Jury to highlight the best and worst food marketing promotions targeting children. Members of The Parents Jury nominate marketing campaigns for consideration by a panel of parents. The panel hands down the final verdict.

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