



The Heavy Burden of Obesity

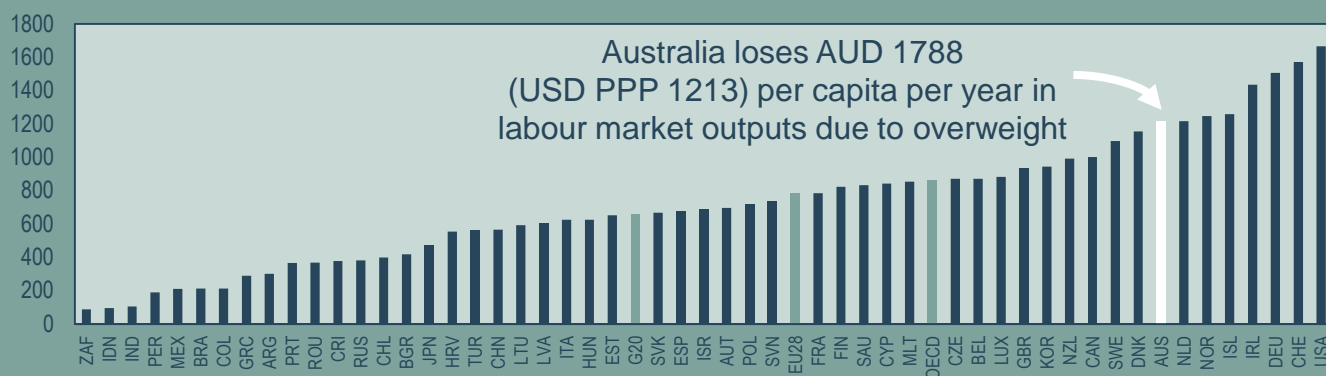
The Economics of Prevention

Australia has one of the highest rates of obesity: nearly **one in three** adults are obese. As a result, Australians live on average **2.7 years** less due to overweight. The impact on the economy is large: overweight accounts for **8.6% of health expenditure**; and lowers labour market outputs by the equivalent of **371 thousand full-time workers** per year. Combined, this means that overweight reduces Australia's **GDP by 3.1%**. To cover these costs, each Australian pays an additional **AUD 678 in taxes** per year.



Australia

Lost labour market output based on average wages, per capita per year, in USD PPP



To tackle the obesity epidemic, Australia has put in place a number of policies, including voluntary front-of-pack food labelling, and voluntary restrictions on advertising targeting children. However, more can be done.

Implementing a communications policy package or policies to encourage reformulation would **prevent non-communicable diseases, reduce health expenditure and increase the productivity of the workforce:**



A communications package – with mandatory front-of-pack labelling and advertising regulations, and mass media campaigns – could prevent 46 thousand non-communicable diseases by 2050, save AUD 57 million per year in health cost, and increase employment and productivity by the equivalent of 4 thousand full-time workers per year



Achieving a 20% calorie reduction for foods high in sugar, salt, calories and saturated fats could prevent 217 thousand non-communicable diseases by 2050, save AUD 228 million per year in health cost, and increase employment and productivity by the equivalent of 10 thousand full-time workers per year

Public health actions to promote healthier lifestyles have a positive impact on population health and are an excellent investment:

On average, for every 1 AUD invested, up to 6 AUD are returned in economic benefits