



foreword

Physical activity, good nutrition and maintaining a healthy weight are important factors for developing and maintaining good health. Although overweight and obesity has long been regarded by health professionals as an important condition that increases the risk of ill-health, it has only recently been recognised as a population-wide problem that requires a whole-of-community approach.

In September 2002, the NSW Government convened the NSW Childhood Obesity Summit in response to the threat of rapidly rising rates of overweight and obesity among children. Two key recommendations of the summit were:

- > to establish a centre of excellence for research into overweight and obesity
- > to commission a state-wide survey to determine the current levels of overweight and obesity, patterns of physical activity and sedentary behaviour, and the nutrition profiles of children and young people in New South Wales.

In 2003, the NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity was established at the University of Sydney. Its first task was to conduct a survey of physical activity and nutrition in school students (SPANS). Almost 5500 school-aged children in NSW participated in the survey, one of the most comprehensive ever conducted in Australia.

This report provides the NSW Government with the information needed for it to further develop its policies and programs in the area, and also for it to assess progress against the Prevention of Obesity in Children and Young People: NSW Government Action Plan 2003–2007.

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