



# Inside our Supermarkets Australia 2024

Assessing company policies and practices  
for supporting healthier food environments  
and improving population nutrition

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## Inside our Supermarkets

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# Executive summary

## Unhealthy diets and excess weight are leading contributors to poor health in Australia.

In order to improve population diets, broad-scale societal change is required, including from the food industry. As the main source of food purchases for Australians, supermarket retailers have an essential role in creating healthy food environments to support population health.

## Benchmarking supermarket policies and practices on nutrition

This study aimed to assess the largest Australian supermarket companies on their voluntary policies and practices for supporting healthier food environments and improving population nutrition. The objective was to highlight where Australian supermarket companies were demonstrating leadership, and identify areas for improvement.

## Globally-applicable assessment methods, tailored to the Australian context

Supermarket policies and practices were assessed using the BIA-Obesity (Business Impact Assessment – Obesity and population nutrition) tool developed by INFORMAS, a global network of public health researchers monitoring food environments in >65 countries globally. The methods were adapted from the Access to Nutrition Index (ATNI) that benchmarks the nutrition-related commitments, performance and disclosure practices of food and beverage manufacturers. This study was a repeat of a similar assessment conducted in Australia in 2018.

For each assessed company, information related to policies and practices for the six domains of the BIA-Obesity tool (see below) were collected from publicly available sources. Company representatives were invited to verify and supplement information collected by the research team (up to the end of 2023), and review recommended actions.

### AREAS ASSESSED

The BIA-Obesity tool considers voluntary company policies and practices across a range of indicators spread across six domains.

For each indicator, the **transparency, comprehensiveness** and **specificity** of voluntary company policies and practices were assessed against industry benchmarks and public health best practice.

Scores were combined across domains, and weighted to derive an overall score out of 100 for each company.

Domain	Policy areas	Weighting
<b>A</b> Corporate strategy	Overarching policies, commitments and reporting practices related to improving population nutrition and addressing obesity	10
<b>B</b> Product formulation	Policies, commitments and reporting practices regarding product development and reformulation to reduce nutrients of concern (i.e., sodium, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar) and energy content	25
<b>C</b> Nutrition labelling & information	Policies, commitments and reporting practices regarding disclosure and presentation of nutrition information on product packaging, in-store and online	15
<b>D</b> Promotion practices	Policies, commitments and reporting practices related to reducing the exposure of children to the promotion of unhealthy foods and brands, and responsible promotion to all consumers	25
<b>E</b> Product accessibility and affordability	Policies, commitments and reporting practices related to the availability, affordability, distribution and placement of healthy compared to unhealthy products	20
<b>F</b> Disclosure of relationships with external groups	Disclosure of corporate relationships with, and support provided to, organisations external to the supply chain related to health and/or nutrition, such as government agencies, political parties, professional associations, research organisations, community and industry groups	5

Australian supermarkets are taking increased steps to address health and nutrition, but their current actions fall far short of global best practice.

## Comparison from 2018 to 2024<sup>^</sup>

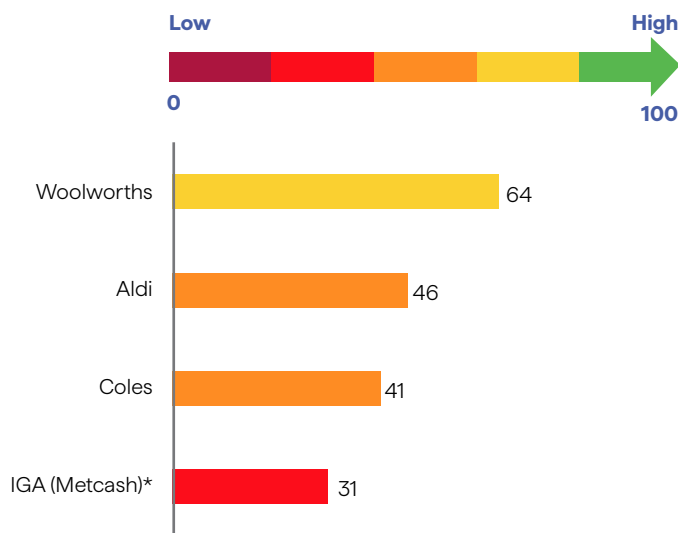
- Mean score of the sector (out of 100) increased from **26 to 46**.
- All supermarket chains have improved on their scores (out of 100) from the 2018 assessment:
  - **Woolworths: 46 → 64**
  - **Aldi: 11\* → 46**
  - **Coles: 40 → 41**
  - **IGA (Metcash): 8 → 31\***

<sup>^</sup>Assessment in 2024 was adjusted to reflect updates in global best practice, due to regulatory and industry changes in Australia and globally

\*Assessments based on publicly available information only

## Australian supermarkets 2024

Policies and practices for supporting healthier food environments and improving population nutrition (scores out of 100)



\*Assessment based on publicly available information only. Individual store initiatives not necessarily reflected.

## Areas in which Australian supermarkets have shown good progress:

- 1 Corporate reporting:** Reporting on the proportion of sales from healthy products (2 out of 4 companies)
- 2 Product formulation:** Pledging for own-brand products to meet the Australian government's Healthy Food Partnership reformulation targets (3 out of 4 companies)
- 3 Nutrition labelling:** Committing to implement the government's Health Star Rating system across all own-brand products (4 out of 4 companies)
- 4 Promotion practices:** Introduction of steps to remove marketing techniques that appeal to children on own-brand product packaging (2 out of 4 companies)
- 5 Healthier checkouts:** Removing children's confectionery from checkouts in all stores (1 out of 4 companies)

## Key areas for improvement across the sector:

- 1 Marketing to children:** No comprehensive strategies to limit the promotion of unhealthy products in-store and online reported by companies
- 2 Affordability of healthy food:** Lack of clear, comprehensive policies to improve the affordability of healthier foods
- 3 Price promotions:** Limited action taken to restrict price promotions (discounts) on unhealthy foods

“ **Much more substantial action is needed across the sector to improve the healthiness of Australian supermarkets.** ”

## Priority recommendations for the supermarket sector

- 1 Healthy food sales targets:** Set company-wide targets to increase the proportion of sales from healthy products, and publicly report progress against this target each year.
- 2 Affordability of healthy food:** Implement concrete actions to improve the affordability of healthy products, and limit price promotions on unhealthy products.
- 3 Healthy checkouts:** Remove unhealthy products, such as confectionery and sugar-sweetened beverages, from displays near registers across all stores nationally.
- 4 Marketing to children:** Reduce exposure of children to unhealthy food marketing, including eliminating use of promotional techniques (e.g., cartoon characters, interactive games, collectible campaigns) with strong appeal to children in relation to unhealthy products and brands.
- 5 Healthier products:** Publicise specific, time-bound targets for reducing nutrients of concern (sodium, sugar, saturated fat, and trans fat) and energy/portion sizes of own-brand products. Routinely report on progress towards commitments and targets.
- 6 Better nutrition labelling:** Implement in-store and digital nutrition information strategies to guide consumers to purchase healthier products (e.g., displaying the Health Star Rating on in-store shelf tags and online). Monitor and report the impact of these strategies on the healthiness of purchases.
- 7 Work with suppliers and branded food manufacturers:** Work across the supply chain to improve nutrition-related practices, including with respect to product development, nutrition labelling and promotion practices.

## Conclusion and implications

- There are increasing expectations from the general public, governments and investors for supermarkets to take strong action on nutrition and health.
- While supermarket chains have made some progress on nutrition over time, more substantial action is needed across the sector to improve the healthiness of Australian supermarket environments.
- Governments need to closely monitor supermarket policies and practices related to nutrition and food affordability, the extent to which supermarket commitments are implemented in practice, and the healthiness of supermarket environments.
- In line with key priorities specified in the National Obesity Strategy (2022-2032) and the National Preventive Health Strategy (2021-2030), **governments should also consider stronger policy intervention in the supermarket sector**, particularly where voluntary company actions have proved insufficient. Potential areas for action in supermarkets include healthy checkouts, restrictions of price promotions on unhealthy food, and mandatory company reporting using evidence-based, nutrition-related metrics.



# Background

## Unhealthy diets and obesity are among the most pressing public health issues in Australia.

Few people in Australia consume diets consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Two thirds of adults and one quarter of children in Australia live with overweight or obesity.<sup>1</sup> Obesity and diet-related risk factors have a substantial impact on the health of individuals, communities, the health system and the economy.<sup>2</sup> The impact of unhealthy diets and obesity disproportionately affects those in low-socioeconomic groups, people living in remote and regional areas, and Indigenous populations.<sup>3</sup>

## A key driver of unhealthy diets among Australians are food environments that do not support health.

The food supply in Australia is increasingly dominated by unhealthy, ultra-processed foods and beverages that are often readily available, relatively inexpensive and heavily marketed.<sup>4</sup>

## Addressing unhealthy food environments and improving population diets requires broad-scale efforts from the whole community.

Societal change will require comprehensive action from the food industry, supported by effective government policy and legislation. Key international health bodies recommend several actions for the food industry to support healthier food environments,<sup>5</sup> including:

- Ensuring that healthy and nutritious choices are widely available and affordable
- Reformulating existing products to reduce nutrients of concern (sodium, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar) and developing new healthier products
- Restricting the exposure of children to the marketing of unhealthy foods and brands
- Providing consumers with clear, easily understood nutrition information on food labels

## Supermarkets have a crucial role to play in supporting healthy diets.

Most of the food that Australians buy is purchased from supermarkets. Supermarket practices, including the types of products available, their prices, the way they are promoted and their placement in-store, shape what people choose to buy and eat. Through their own-brand products, supermarkets are amongst the largest manufacturers of packaged foods in Australia. In addition, supermarkets have influential relationships with other industry actors, such as the suppliers and manufacturers of branded packaged foods. Accordingly, supermarkets have a substantial opportunity, and responsibility, to support the health of the communities in which they operate.



94% OF ADULTS

92% OF CHILDREN

do not eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables<sup>6</sup>



53%

of packaged foods in Australian supermarkets are classified as unhealthy<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018. *National Health Survey: First Results, 2017-18*.

<sup>2</sup> Colagiuri et al. *The cost of overweight and obesity in Australia*. *Medical Journal of Australia*. 2010;192(5):260-264

<sup>3</sup> VicHealth, 2016. *Obesity and healthy eating in Australia: Evidence summary*.

<sup>4</sup> Swinburn et al. *The global obesity pandemic: shaped by global drivers and local environments*. *The Lancet*. 2011; 378(9793):804-14.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). *Guidance Framework to Support Healthier Food Retail Environments for Children*.

<sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021. *2020-21 National Health Survey*.

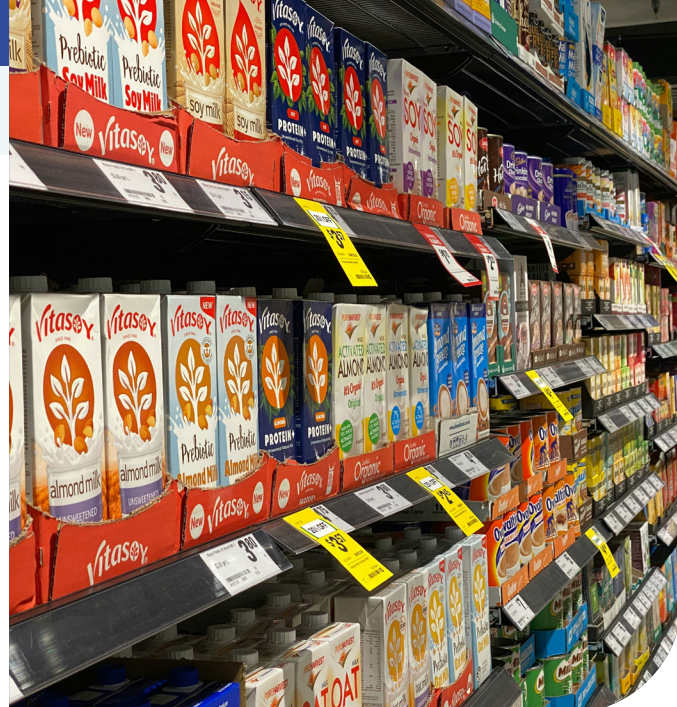
<sup>7</sup> The George Institute for Global Health, FoodSwitch data 2022 and 2023. Published online on the Food Environments Dashboard: [foodenvironmentdashboard.com.au](https://foodenvironmentdashboard.com.au).

# An increasing focus on nutrition in Australia and globally

There is building momentum for change to improve population diets. Governments are increasingly implementing a range of policy measures to address unhealthy food environments.<sup>8</sup> The food industry is placing greater attention on the issue, including in their reporting of company actions related to nutrition.

### Examples of Australian government initiatives related to nutrition

- The **Health Star Rating** (HSR) is a voluntary government-endorsed front-of-package labelling system that rates the healthiness of packaged food products. The government has stated a target for 70% of intended products to voluntarily adopt the HSR by November 2025, with the potential to mandate HSR labelling if the uptake target is not achieved by industry. Approximately one third of products in supermarkets displayed HSR labelling in 2023.<sup>9</sup>
- The government's **Healthy Food Partnership Reformulation Program** is a program to encourage Australian food manufacturers to meet nutrient limits (sodium, saturated fat and sugars) for specific food categories. Participating companies in the voluntary program aim for 80% of the product category by sales volume to meet set nutrient limits.



### Industry initiatives related to health

- Globally, some supermarket retailers and packaged food and beverage manufacturing companies have taken some action on nutrition,<sup>10</sup> although progress over time has been limited.
- The **Australian Association of National Advertisers** introduced a Food and Beverage Advertising Code in November 2021. The voluntary guidelines restrict some types of unhealthy food advertising directed to children of 15 years and under. While the code reflects some efforts from industry to address unhealthy food marketing to children, several aspects of the code do not meet public health best practice in protecting children from exposure to unhealthy food marketing.<sup>11, 12</sup> For example, brand advertising and product packaging are excluded from current voluntary restrictions.

### Global policy actions

- The United Kingdom **recently introduced regulations to limit the promotion of food products** high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) – the first country to regulate marketing strategies of food retailers. As of October 2022, large retailers cannot display HFSS products in prominent locations, such as store entrances, aisle ends and checkouts, as well as equivalent locations online. In October 2025, volume price discounts (such as 'buy one, get one free') of HFSS products are set to be banned in the UK.

<sup>8</sup> Food Policy Index for Australia, 2022. <https://www.foodpolicyindex.org.au/>

<sup>9</sup> The George Institute for Global Health, 2023. *State of the Food Supply* report.

<sup>10</sup> According to national and international benchmarking initiatives such as Access to Nutrition Index, the World Benchmarking Alliance and INFORMAS.

<sup>11</sup> Obesity Policy Coalition, 2018. *Overbranded, Underprotected: How industry self-regulation is failing to protect children from unhealthy food marketing* report.

<sup>12</sup> World Health Organization, 2023. *Policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing: WHO guideline*.

# Monitoring for accountability

Civil society is increasingly advocating for greater accountability from supermarkets and the food industry with respect to nutrition and health.<sup>13,14</sup> There are several ongoing initiatives that seek to evaluate food industry actions to support healthy and environmentally sustainable diets. Prominent global initiatives include the **Access to Nutrition Initiative** (ATNI) and the **World Benchmarking Alliance**.

**INFORMAS** (International Network for Food and Obesity/ Non-communicable diseases Research, Monitoring and Action Support) is a global network (active in 60+ countries) of public-interest organisations and researchers that aims to monitor, benchmark and support actions to increase healthy food environments and reduce obesity.

In 2018, INFORMAS developed the **BIA-Obesity (Business Impact Assessment – Obesity and population-level nutrition) tool** to benchmark voluntary food company nutrition-related policies and commitments at a national-level. The tool has been customised for different sectors, including supermarkets, food and beverage manufacturers and quick service chains. The BIA-Obesity tool was first implemented in Australia in 2018, and subsequently implemented in eight other countries and across the the European Union.

### Past international evaluations of food company policies and practices related to nutrition, led by INFORMAS

- Australia 2018
- New Zealand 2018
- Canada 2019
- Thailand 2019
- Malaysia 2019
- Belgium 2022
- France 2022
- European Union 2022

<sup>13</sup> Swinburn et al. *Strengthening of accountability systems to create healthy food environments and reduce global obesity*. The Lancet. 2015;385(9986).

<sup>14</sup> Garton et al. *A collective call to strengthen monitoring and evaluation efforts to support healthy and sustainable food systems: 'The Accountability Pact'*. Public Health Nutrition. 2022; 25(9):2353–2357.



# Assessment approach

## Project aims

This project aimed to assess the largest Australian supermarket companies on their voluntary policies and practices for supporting healthier food environments and improving population nutrition. The objective was to highlight where Australian supermarket companies were demonstrating leadership in relation to supporting population health and nutrition, and identify areas for improvement.

The assessment used the BIA-Obesity tool and methods developed by INFORMAS. The study was a repeat of a **similar assessment conducted in Australia in 2018**. For the 2024 assessment, the scoring criteria were adapted to reflect progress in best practice benchmarks, based on changes to government regulation and industry practice in Australia and internationally. Updates to the criteria included: additional indicators related to the reporting of company performance against commitments; revising *Nutrition Labelling* indicators to reflect updated government implementation guidelines and targets for the Health Star Rating system; and revising the *Promotion Practices* domain to align with recently released guidelines from the World Health Organization and changes to the industry self-regulatory code.

The project formed part of a broader initiative to assess voluntary company policies across different sectors of the food industry, with other sectors assessed including food and non-alcoholic beverage manufacturers, and quick service restaurants (fast-food outlets). Another arm of the study assessed the environmental sustainability policies of companies across the three sectors. These results will be published separately.

This evaluation did not assess the healthiness of the overall product portfolios of Australian supermarket companies. However, measures of portfolio healthiness were drawn from elsewhere to supplement our analyses.<sup>15</sup>

## Process for conducting the assessment

1

Research team briefs company on assessment process

2

Research team collects preliminary data (from publicly-available sources) for each company

3

Research team works with company representatives to refine and supplement preliminary data

4

Research team assesses policy information against best practice benchmarks and calculates a score for each company

5

Research team prepares a scorecard for each company, showing areas of strength and recommendations for action

6

Scorecard and comparison with rest of sector privately shared with each company

7

Results publicly-released, including individual company and industry sector performance

<sup>15</sup> The George Institute for Global Health 2023. *The State of the Food Supply* report.

# Assessment approach

## Companies selected for inclusion

The four leading supermarket retailers in Australia, based on market share, were assessed.

Supermarket retailer	Share of grocery retail market (%)*
Woolworths	35.5
Coles	26.7
IGA (Metcash)	7.6
Aldi	6.4

\* Based on Euromonitor 2021 data (grocery retailing in Australia)

## Data collection and validation

Information related to company policies, commitments and practices in relation to the six domains of the BIA-Obesity assessment tool (see next page) were collected between February and May 2023, from publicly available sources such as company websites and corporate sustainability reports. From June to November 2023, representatives from each company were invited to verify and supplement information collected by the research team.

## Scoring of company policies and practices

Company policies and practices (up to the end of 2023) related to nutrition were assessed using the BIA-Obesity tool. The tool considers voluntary company actions across a range of indicators spread across six domains. For each indicator, the **transparency, comprehensiveness** and **specificity** of voluntary company policies and practices were assessed against industry benchmarks and public health best practice. Scores were combined across domains and weighted to derive an overall score out of 100 for each company.

# Assessment areas

Domain	Policy areas	Key indicator categories	Weighting (out of 100)*
<b>A</b> <b>Corporate strategy</b>	Overarching policies, commitments and reporting practices related to improving population nutrition and addressing obesity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to nutrition and health in corporate strategy</li> <li>• Reporting against nutrition and health objectives and targets</li> <li>• Reporting of governance arrangements related to nutrition</li> <li>• Reporting on the proportion of overall sales from healthy products</li> </ul>	10
<b>B</b> <b>Product formulation</b>	Policies, commitments and reporting practices regarding product development and reformulation to reduce nutrients of concern (i.e., sodium, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar) and energy content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targets and actions related to reduction of sodium, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and portion size/energy content across own-brand portfolio</li> <li>• Engagement with government-led initiatives related to product formulation (e.g., the Healthy Food Partnership)</li> <li>• Engagement with suppliers on improving the healthiness of product composition</li> </ul>	25
<b>C</b> <b>Nutrition labelling &amp; information</b>	Policies, commitments and reporting practices regarding disclosure and presentation of nutrition information on product packaging, in-store and online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting of the implementation of the Health Star Rating system across the own-brand portfolio</li> <li>• Provision of in-store and online nutrition information</li> <li>• Use of health and nutrition claims</li> <li>• Engagement with suppliers on adopting Health Star Rating labelling</li> </ul>	15
<b>D</b> <b>Promotion practices</b>	Policies, commitments and reporting practices related to reducing the exposure of children to the promotion of unhealthy foods and brands, and responsible promotion to all consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies to reduce the exposure of children to unhealthy food marketing, in broadcast media, online, in-store and other settings</li> <li>• Promotion practices in-store and online including products featured in catalogues and collectible campaigns</li> <li>• Engagement with suppliers to prioritise promotions on healthy products and reduce promotions on unhealthy products</li> </ul>	25
<b>E</b> <b>Product accessibility &amp; affordability</b>	Policies, commitments and reporting practices related to the availability, affordability, distribution and placement of healthy products compared to unhealthy products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing availability, distribution and prominent in-store placement of healthy products, while restricting that of unhealthy products</li> <li>• Increasing affordability of healthier products, and pricing and discounting strategies</li> </ul>	20
<b>F</b> <b>Disclosure of relationships with external groups</b>	Disclosure of corporate relationships with, and support provided to, organisations external to the supply chain related to health and/or nutrition, such as government agencies, political parties, professional associations, research organisations, community and industry groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disclosure and transparency of relationships with organisations related to health and nutrition, and lobbying and political practices</li> </ul>	5

\*Weighting derived based on the relative importance of company policies and practices in each domain, as determined by INFORMAS

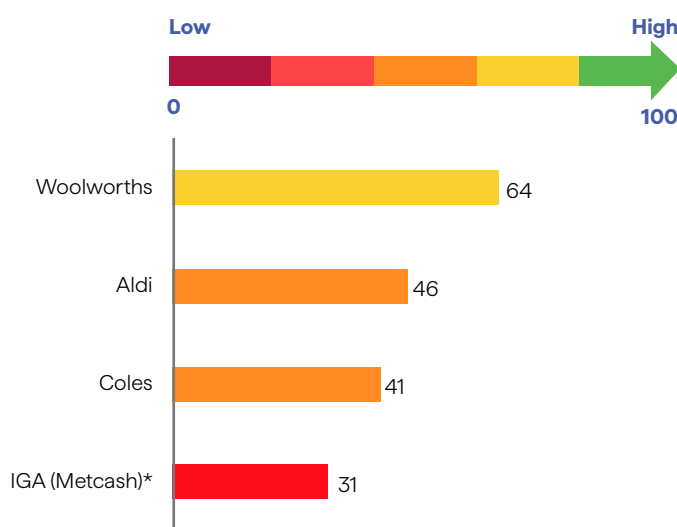
# Results: Key findings

Australian supermarkets are taking increased steps to address health and nutrition, but their current actions fall far short of global best practice.

- Company scores (out of 100) ranged from 31 to 64, with a **mean of 46**
- Three of the four supermarkets selected for assessment fully engaged with the research process by verifying collected data and providing additional information

## Australian supermarkets 2024

Policies and practices for supporting healthier food environments and improving population nutrition (scores out of 100)



\*Assessment based on publicly available information only. Individual store initiatives not necessarily reflected

While Australian supermarkets have increased their focus on nutrition, with improved disclosure of relevant activities, there were limited clear policies and practices related to improving product accessibility and affordability of healthy foods.

Supermarket	Overall score (out of 100)	A Corporate strategy (out of 100)	B Product formulation (out of 100)	C Nutrition labelling & information (out of 100)	D Promotion practices (out of 100)	E Product accessibility & affordability (out of 100)	F Disclosure of external relationships (out of 100)
Woolworths	64	94	79	84	62	18	75
Aldi	46	50	47	29	50	42	89
Coles	41	63	46	51	46	3	72
IGA (Metcash)*	31	50	41	24	28	5	75

\*Assessment based on publicly available information only. Individual store initiatives not necessarily reflected.



## *Areas in which Australian supermarkets have shown good progress:*

- **Corporate reporting:** Reporting on the proportion of sales from healthy products (2 out of 4 companies)
- **Product formulation:** Pledging for own-brand products to meet the Australian government's Healthy Food Partnership reformulation targets (3 out of 4 companies)
- **Nutrition labelling:** Committing to implement the government's Health Star Rating system across all own-brand products (4 out of 4 companies)
- **Promotion practices:** Introducing steps to remove marketing techniques that appeal to children on own-brand product packaging (2 out of 4 companies)
- **Healthier checkouts:** Removing children's confectionery from checkouts in all stores (1 out of 4 companies)

## *Key areas for improvement across the sector:*

- **Marketing to children:** No reporting of comprehensive strategies to limit the promotion of unhealthy products in-store and online
- **Affordability of healthy food:** Lack of clear, comprehensive policies to improve the affordability of healthier foods
- **Price promotions on unhealthy foods:** Limited action to restrict price promotions (discounts) on unhealthy foods



# A | Corporate strategy

## Good practice statement

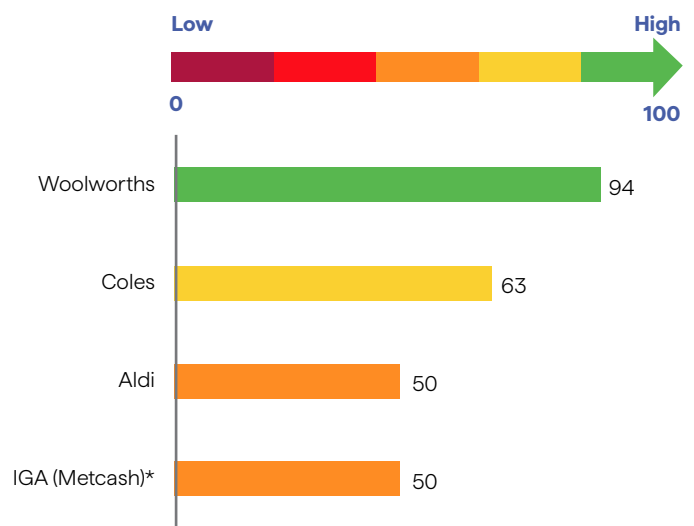
The company has a strategic document or collection of documents that outline the company's overarching commitment to population nutrition and health. This may include mission statements, strategies and/or overarching policies that are publicly available and apply to the national context.

## Key findings

**Supermarkets demonstrated some focus on health and nutrition; however, often lacked detail in their commitments and overarching strategies.**

- All supermarkets published national-level commitments to improving population nutrition and health.
- While all supermarkets reported progress towards these commitments in public reports, Woolworths was the only retailer to have their nutrition reporting externally audited. Woolworths also reported governance arrangements related to nutrition.
- Of the four supermarkets, only Woolworths reported on overall sales from healthy and unhealthy products, and reported progress towards their target to grow this proportion annually. Coles reported their sales from own-brand products only. Aldi and IGA did not report on the healthiness of company sales.

Mean domain score: 64 / 100



\*Assessment based on publicly available information only

## Company reporting on proportion of sales from healthy and unhealthy products

The proportion of a company's food-related sales from healthy and unhealthy products has been consistently highlighted by benchmarking initiatives and investor groups as a priority metric for companies to disclose their overall performance on nutrition.<sup>16</sup> The metric encompasses business-wide actions across nutrition-related areas (such as product formulation, marketing and distribution), and can be used to track company progress on nutrition.

Widespread reporting of the metric can allow for comparison across companies differing in size and market share.



<sup>16</sup> Including groups such as Access to Nutrition Index (ATNI) and World Benchmarking Alliance, Share Action and the Food Foundation.

# Results by domain: Corporate strategy

## Key recommendations for the supermarket sector:

- 1 Set a target to increase the proportion of sales from healthy products, and publicly report progress against this target each year
- 2 Adopt government-endorsed standards for defining healthy and unhealthy foods and brands
- 3 Report on governance arrangements that assign accountability for the company's nutrition-related commitments, policies and practices

## Leading policy and practice examples

Indicator	Australian and international leading policy and practice examples
Commitment to nutrition and health in corporate strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tesco</b> (United Kingdom) has in place overarching commitments to support healthy and sustainable diets. The retailer annually discloses progress towards achieving health and nutrition targets, released in publicly available reports. This includes a target to increase the proportion of sales from healthy food (as defined by their nutrient profiling system, based on the UK Government's nutrient profiling model) to 65% by 2025, from 58% as of 2020.</li> <li>• <b>Lidl</b> (United Kingdom) has pledged to increase sales of healthier products to 85% of total sales (based on tonnage volume) and increase sales of fresh fruit and vegetables by 35%, by 2025. The retailer defines healthier products using a classification system based on UK Government reformulation targets.</li> </ul>
Reporting against nutrition and health objectives and targets	
Reporting on proportion of sales from healthy products	
Reporting of governance arrangements related to nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kraft Heinz</b> (food manufacturer, international) assigns key sustainability-related (including health and nutrition) performance metrics to the Chief Executive Officer and other company leaders. Achievement of these metrics are linked with compensation.</li> </ul>

### Linking nutrition with environmental sustainability

Beyond their impact on health, population diets also affect the environment. Global food systems substantially contribute to climate change, biodiversity loss, water use, pollution, excessive greenhouse gas emissions, and deforestation.<sup>17</sup> The food system is also inherently vulnerable to the changing climate, meaning that food production will face significant challenges as global temperatures increase.<sup>18</sup>

Efforts to improve the healthiness of population diets are likely to have flow-on benefits to the environment, given that diets that are high in fruits, vegetables and low in animal-source and ultra-processed foods are the least environmentally damaging.<sup>19</sup> There are, however, some areas where trade-offs exist. For example, retailer actions to reduce red meat purchases may inadvertently promote consumption of unhealthy, ultra-processed 'plant-based meat' alternatives.<sup>20</sup> Retailers can avoid these trade-offs by promoting products that are both healthy and environmentally sustainable, such as minimally processed plant-based alternatives (like beans, legumes, and tofu). Aligning company policies to promote healthy and sustainable diets also contributes to broader international efforts related to sustainable development.



<sup>17</sup> Ritchie, Rasao and Roser, 2022. *Environmental Impacts of Food Production*. Published online at OurWorldInData.org

<sup>18</sup> Public Health Association Australia 2021. *Climate Disruption, the Food System and Food Security* policy position statement.

<sup>19</sup> Crippa et al. *Food systems are responsible for a third of global anthropogenic GHG emissions*. *Nature Food*. 2021;2:198–209.

<sup>20</sup> Livingstone and Marchese. *Is fake meat healthy?: And what's actually in it?* *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia*. 2022;27(2):48–49.

# B | Product formulation

### Good practice statement

The company has a set of product formulation commitments relating to new product development and reformulation of existing own-brand products.

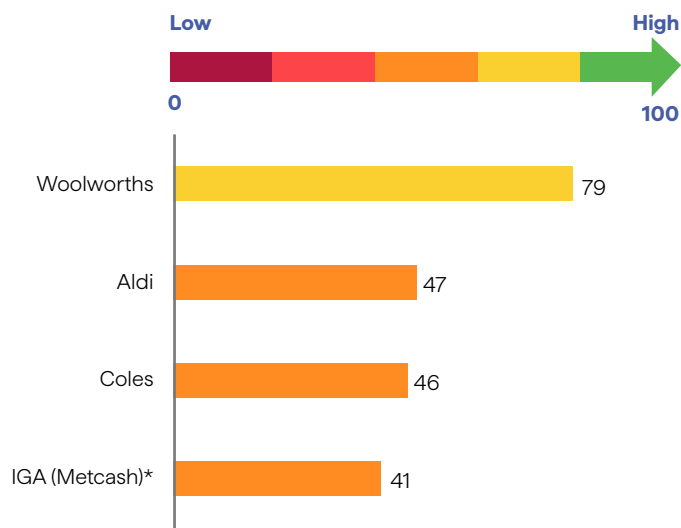
The commitment focuses on limiting nutrients of concern (including sodium, saturated fat, trans fat and added sugars) and reducing energy content/portion sizes, whilst limiting products that are discretionary and ultra-processed. Progress towards commitments and targets are routinely reported on, with reference to government-endorsed guidelines and targets, such as the Australian government's Healthy Food Partnership (HFP) Reformulation Program. In addition, the company incentivises other food manufacturers and suppliers to improve the healthiness of their products, in support of government targets and guidelines.

### Key findings

**Companies are taking some action to improve the healthiness of own-brand products; although the comprehensiveness of their commitments and reporting of progress varies across the sector.**

- All companies stated commitments to reduce levels of sodium, saturated fat and sugar in their own-brand products. However, specific reporting on progress was often limited.
- Woolworths was the leader in this domain, reporting specific and time-bound targets to reduce levels of sodium, saturated fat and sugar across its own-brand range, in line with the government's reformulation targets.
- 3 out of 4 supermarkets (Woolworths, Coles and IGA) noted participating in the government's Healthy Food Partnership Reformulation Program.
- There was limited reporting of supermarket efforts to incentivise other food manufacturers to improve product healthiness.

Mean domain score: 53 / 100



\*Assessment based on publicly available information only

# Results by domain: Product formulation

## How healthy are supermarket own-brand portfolios?

Supermarket	Average HSR (out of 5 stars)	Proportion HSR $\geq 3.5$ (%)	Proportion discretionary (%)	Proportion ultra-processed (%)
Woolworths	3.4	63.2%	33.4%	53.3%
IGA	3.3	62.4%	29.3%	43.2%
Coles	3.3	59.0%	37.9%	59.0%
Aldi	2.9	45.6%	48.0%	63.8%

\*This information is provided to add context around the assessed company; this analysis was not included in the assessment of nutrition policies. Results based on data collected by The George Institute for Global Health in March-June 2023 and published in The State of the Food Supply Report 2023. HSR = Health Star Rating

## Key recommendations for the supermarket sector:

- 1 Develop** and publicise specific, time-bound targets for reducing nutrients of concern (sodium, sugar, saturated fat, and artificially produced trans fat) and energy/portion sizes of own-brand products
- 2 Routinely report** on progress towards commitments and targets. For example, report on the nutritional content of own-brand products, by product category, including changes over time and with reference to government reformulation targets
- 3 Reduce** the proportion of ultra-processed products in the company's own-brand product portfolio, for example, by adding healthy, minimally processed products and removing unhealthy product lines
- 4 Work** with food manufacturers and suppliers to improve the healthiness of their products, in support of government targets and guidelines. For example, ensure contract negotiations with manufacturers and suppliers incentivise reformulation and new product development of healthier foods

## Leading policy and practice examples

Indicator	Australian and international leading policy and practice examples
Targets and actions related to reduction of sodium, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and portion size/ energy content across own-brand portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lidl</b> (Germany) has committed to lower the average sales-weighted level of added sugar and added salt in their own-brand products by 20 per cent by 2025, from a baseline year of 2015. Their commitment references several national and global nutrition policy documents and expert recommendations.</li> <li>• <b>Simplot</b> (food manufacturer, Australia) has taken steps to improve the overall healthiness of their product portfolio through acquiring brands in healthy categories, and divesting from unhealthy brands.</li> <li>• <b>Kraft Heinz</b> (food and beverage manufacturer, international) publishes a target for 85% of their portfolio to meet their nutrition criteria by 2025.</li> <li>• <b>Mars Food</b> (manufacturer, global) discloses specific, timebound targets on reformulation, including for 95% of Mars Food products to meet its adopted nutrient criteria by 2025, and to achieve a 5% reduction in sodium across the Mars Food portfolio by 2025.</li> </ul>
Engagement with government-led initiatives related to product formulation (e.g., the Healthy Food Partnership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coles</b> (Australia) report that 78% of own-brand products at the end of FY23 met the targets set by the Healthy Food Partnership's Reformulation Program.</li> <li>• <b>Lactalis</b> (food manufacturer, Canada) publishes their pledge for cottage cheese, processed cheese, natural cheese and butter products to meet government targets on sodium reduction by 2026.</li> </ul>
Engagement with suppliers on improving the healthiness of product composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the four major supermarkets in Australia, only <b>Woolworths</b> (Australia) reports engaging suppliers to reformulate products and promote appropriate portion sizes, through their establishment of a Trade Partner Sustainability Council.</li> </ul>

# C | Nutrition labelling and information

## Good practice statement

The company has a set of published commitments relating to nutrition labelling that are designed to inform consumers about the nutrient composition of products in an easy-to-understand way.

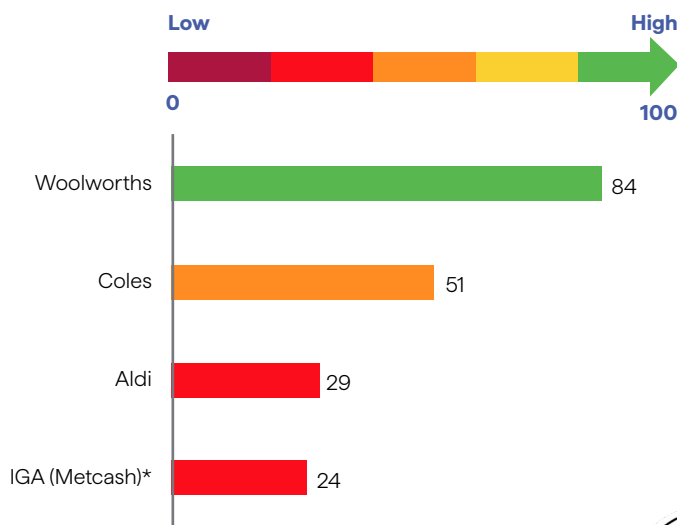
This includes displaying the Health Star Rating labelling on all eligible own-brand products. The company reports on their implementation of nutrition/healthy eating information and education initiatives, including evaluation of their effectiveness.

## Key findings

**Supermarkets have continued to implement the Health Star Rating system, with some examples of efforts to provide improved nutrition information in-store and online.**

- All four supermarkets have pledged to implement the Health Star Rating on all eligible own-brand products. Woolworths, Coles and Aldi reported the Health Star Rating is displayed on all eligible own-brand products, while IGA has committed to do so by July 2025.
- There was limited reporting of supermarket efforts to incentivise branded food manufacturers to implement the Health Star Rating.
- Coles and Woolworths provide comprehensive nutrition information for products available for sale online, and label own-brand products with information on trans fat content.
- Woolworths was the only company to have a clear policy that nutrition content claims (e.g., low in sugar) are made only on healthy own-brand products, as defined with government-endorsed guidelines.
- Woolworths was the only supermarket to provide summary nutrition information (the Health Star Rating) on in-store shelf labelling for selected products.
- Coles and Woolworths introduced some online measures to guide consumers to purchase healthier products.

## Mean domain score: 47 / 100



\*Assessment based on publicly available information only

## Implementation of Health Star Rating on supermarket own-brand products, as at mid-2023

Supermarket	% own-brand products displaying the Health Star Rating
Woolworths	93%
Coles	89%
Aldi	61%
IGA	53%†

Results based on data collected by The George Institute for Global Health in March-June 2023 and published in The State of the Food Supply Report 2023. †Information provided by company to the research team.





# Results by domain: Nutrition labelling and information

## Key recommendations for the supermarket sector:

- 1 **Implement** in-store and digital strategies to guide consumers to purchase healthier products by providing nutrition information and healthy eating education (e.g., displaying the Health Star Rating on in-store shelf tags and online across all products, ongoing nutrition initiatives on consumer-facing apps). Monitor and report the impact of these strategies on the healthiness of purchases
- 2 **Introduce** a policy to only make nutrition content claims (e.g., “99% fat free”) on products that are classified as ‘healthy’ (using government guidelines for classifying product healthiness)
- 3 **Provide** comprehensive online nutrition information for all products
- 4 **Commit** to label artificially produced trans fat on all relevant products
- 5 **Incentivise** branded food manufacturers and suppliers to adopt the Health Star Rating on their products

## Leading policy and practice examples

Indicator	Australian and international leading policy and practice examples
Reporting of the implementation of the Health Star Rating system across the own-brand portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Woolworths</b> (Australia) publicly reports that 100% of eligible own-brand products display the Health Star Rating.</li> <li>• <b>McCain Foods</b> (food manufacturer, Australia) reports full adoption of the Health Star Rating on eligible products. This has been verified by independent evaluations.</li> </ul>
Provision of in-store and online nutrition information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Woolworths</b> (Australia) displays Health Star Ratings on selected electronic in-store shelf labels, online and in catalogues. Woolworths’ Food Tracker by HealthyLife provides information on the healthiness of consumer purchases with reference to the Australian Dietary Guidelines and highlights healthier product alternatives.</li> <li>• In their online store, <b>Coles</b> (Australia) has implemented product filters for healthy foods and displays Health Star Ratings on some products.</li> </ul>
Use of health and nutrition claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Asda, Tesco</b> and <b>Sainsbury’s</b> (United Kingdom) have pledged that own-brand products that do not meet their healthiness criteria cannot display health or nutrition claims, or ‘healthier’ branding and logos</li> <li>• <b>Danone</b> (food manufacturer, international) commits to not display nutrition content or health claims on any products with a Health Star Rating below 2.5 stars by October 2024.</li> </ul>
Engagement with suppliers on adopting Health Star Rating labelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of their Trade Partner Sustainability Council for Healthier Choices, <b>Woolworths</b> (Australia) encourages suppliers to increase uptake of the Health Star Rating.</li> </ul>

# D | Promotion practices

## Good practice statement

The company has a comprehensive commitment to reduce the exposure of adults and children (aged <18 years) to the marketing of unhealthy foods and brands that is independently audited on a regular basis.

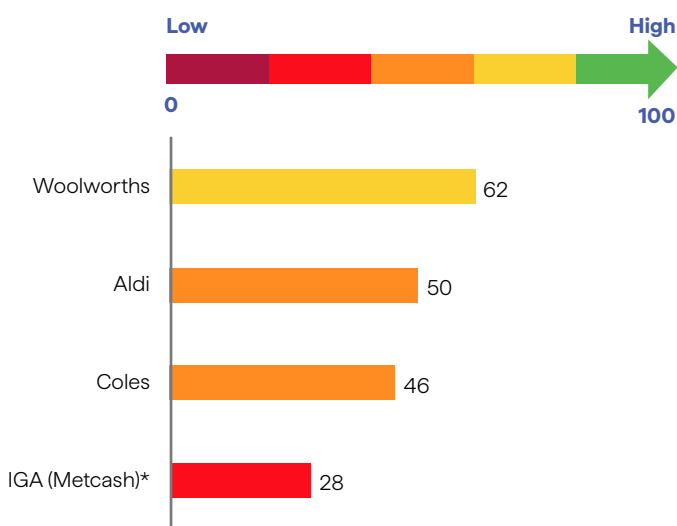
This policy clearly defines the media and settings included in the policy, and addresses marketing and promotion in regular catalogues/circulars, in-store promotions, loyalty programs, product giveaways and tastings.

## Key findings

**Supermarkets have taken some steps to increase the promotion of healthy foods, although more action is needed to limit the promotion of unhealthy foods.**

- Across all companies, there were few steps taken to limit the promotion of unhealthy products in-store and online. Aldi was the only supermarket to report limited in-store advertising of unhealthy products and brands.
- Aldi and Woolworths have pledged a minimum number of pages in their catalogues dedicated to healthy foods.
- Coles and Woolworths have implemented some actions to incentivise purchases of fruit and vegetables through their loyalty programs.
- Beyond the commitments outlined in the industry's self-regulatory code for marketing to children, Coles and Woolworths have introduced policies to remove marketing techniques that appeal to children on own-brand product packaging.
- Most supermarkets (3 out of 4) reported the number of incidences of non-compliance with industry marketing codes. However, none of the companies had their compliance audited by an external third party.

## Mean domain score: 47 / 100



\*Assessment based on publicly available information only

## The products featured in weekly Australian supermarket catalogues are at odds with the recommendations in the Australian Dietary Guidelines

- Almost half (43%) of food products advertised in weekly supermarket catalogues are 'unhealthy' (Woolworths and Coles only, data from 2015).<sup>21</sup>
- Many supermarkets in other countries feature a much lower proportion of unhealthy products in their weekly catalogues. For example, supermarkets in India (11% unhealthy products) and Philippines (no unhealthy products advertised) promoted a healthier set of products.<sup>22</sup>



<sup>21</sup> Cameron et al. Do the foods advertised in Australian supermarket catalogues reflect national dietary guidelines? Health Promotion International. 2017;32(1):113-121.

<sup>22</sup> Charlton et al. Supermarkets and unhealthy food marketing: An international comparison of the content of supermarket catalogues/circulars. Preventive Medicine. 2015;81:163-173.

# Results by domain: Promotion practices

## Key recommendations for the supermarket sector:

- 1 Implement** policies to limit promotion of unhealthy products, and prioritise the promotion of healthy products across all settings (e.g., in-store, online, in weekly catalogues). This includes incentivising, for example, as part of contractual arrangements, food manufacturers and suppliers to prioritise promotional activities related to healthy foods and brands
- 2 Eliminate** use of promotion techniques (e.g., cartoon characters, interactive games, collectible campaigns) with strong appeal to children in relation to unhealthy products and brands
- 3 Routinely report** on compliance with marketing policies and commitments, audited by an independent third party

## Leading policy and practice examples

Indicator	Australian and international leading policy and practice examples
Policies to reduce the exposure of children to unhealthy food marketing, in broadcast media, online, in-store and other settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In 2021, <b>Morrisons</b> (United Kingdom) removed all characters that appeal to children from packaging of children's snacks that are high in fat, sugar and sodium. Similarly, <b>Woolworths</b> (Australia) has pledged that by 2025 characters appealing to children will only appear on packaging of healthier products (applies to own-brand only).</li><li>• <b>Kellanova</b> (food manufacturer, Australia) pledges to not advertise unhealthy products (those not meeting the Nutrient Profiling Scoring Criterion) in environments where children gather, including schools, family clinic and health facilities.</li></ul>
Promotion practices in in-store and online settings, including products featured in catalogues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Aldi</b> (Australia) commits to dedicate the first three pages of regular catalogues to fresh food categories.</li></ul>

# E | Product accessibility and affordability

## Good practice statement

The company strives to make healthier products readily available and affordable to all population groups, with healthier products priced at similar or lower prices than less healthy alternatives.

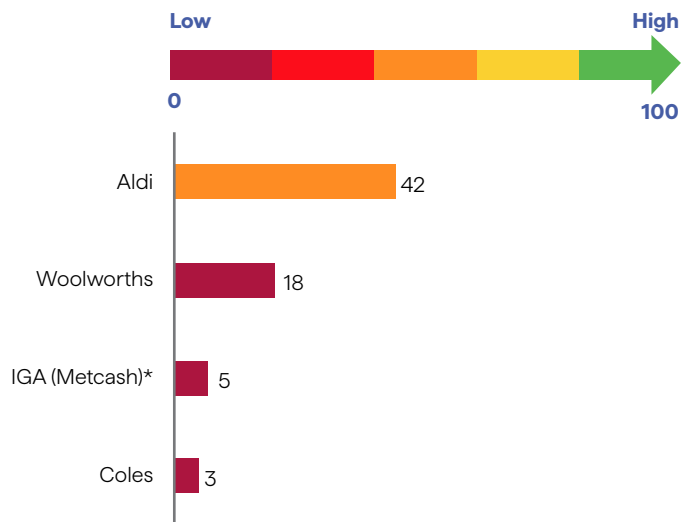
The company also ensures that product positioning in-store and online favours healthy foods, including through the relative shelf and floor space allocated to different types of products, the types of products promoted in prominent places in-store (e.g. checkouts, end-of-aisles), and the use of price promotions.

## Key findings

**There were few clear policies and actions to address the accessibility and affordability of healthy products, relative to unhealthy products.**

- This was the lowest scoring domain.
- No companies adopted policies to ensure the price of healthy or healthier products are not more expensive than 'standard' products or less healthy alternatives.
- The top performer in this domain, Aldi, reported limited price promotions and multi-buy specials on unhealthy foods. No other companies had commitments around restricting price promotions or discounts on unhealthy foods.
- Woolworths was the only company to implement a 'healthier' checkout policy, with their pledge to remove children's confectionery from checkouts in all stores. They also report at least 80% of snacks at checkouts have a Health Star Rating of 3.5 stars or more.
- Aldi and Woolworths had some commitments to increase the display of healthier foods at end-of-aisle displays.
- No supermarkets had commitments to restrict the sale of certain less healthy products, such as energy drinks, to children.

## Mean domain score: 17 / 100



\*Assessment based on publicly available information only

## Checkout displays in Australian supermarkets heavily promote unhealthy foods and beverages (data from 2020)<sup>23</sup>



<sup>23</sup>Schultz et al. Availability and placement of healthy and discretionary foods in Australian supermarkets by chain and level of socio-economic disadvantage. Public Health Nutrition. 2021;24(2):203-214.

# Results by domain: Product accessibility and affordability

## Key recommendations for the supermarket sector:

- 1 **Remove** unhealthy products, such as confectionery and sugar-sweetened beverages, from displays near registers across all stores nationally
- 2 **Increase** the proportion of healthy products displayed in high-traffic and prominent areas (e.g., end caps, mid-aisle displays, island bins and at eye-level)
- 3 **Restrict** price promotions (including discounts and multi-buy specials) on unhealthy products
- 4 **Improve** the affordability of healthy products through comprehensive policy and practice change
- 5 **Increase** the proportion of shelf and floor space dedicated to healthy categories and products
- 6 **Ensure** healthy products are widely available and equitably distributed across all geographic areas and store formats, particularly in rural/remote areas and lower-income communities
- 7 **Link** rewards and discounts through loyalty programs to encourage healthier purchases, and avoid linking rewards to unhealthy products and brands

## Leading policy and practice examples

Indicator	Australian and international leading policy and practice examples
Increasing availability, distribution and prominent in-store placement of healthy products, while restricting that of unhealthy products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Outback Stores</b> (retailer, remote communities in Australia) implements a range of in-store placement strategies to promote health. For example, locating sugar-sweetened beverages to the back of stores, and ensuring water and diet drink options make up at least half of beverage displays.</li> <li>• <b>Woolworths</b> (Australia) has committed to removing children's confectionery from checkouts areas, and ensuring at least 80% of snacks placed at checkouts are healthy. Woolworths also report allocating greater shelf space for healthier products (those with a Health Star Rating of at least 3.5) within end-of-aisle displays.</li> <li>• Several supermarkets across the United Kingdom (<b>Waitrose, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, Lidl, Co-op, Asda, Aldi</b> and <b>Tesco</b>) and New Zealand (<b>Countdown</b>) restrict the sale of energy drinks to children under the age of 16.</li> </ul>
Increasing affordability of healthier products, and pricing and discounting strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sainsbury</b> and <b>Tesco</b> (United Kingdom) voluntarily ceased multi-buy promotions of foods high in sugar, fat and sodium.</li> <li>• <b>Co-op</b> (United Kingdom) has in place a policy that all healthier own-brand products are no more expensive than their standard equivalent product (based on price per kg). The supermarket monitors and reports on their compliance to this commitment.</li> <li>• The Healthy Food Strategy of <b>Outback Stores</b> (retailer, remote communities in Australia) ensures sugar-sweetened beverages are not discounted, and low or no sugar beverages are at least 25% cheaper than full sugar varieties.</li> <li>• <b>Delhaize</b> (Belgium) incentivizes the purchasing of healthier products, where products with a 'NutriScore' of A or B receive an automatic 5-15% discount via the supermarket's loyalty program.</li> </ul>



# F | Disclosure of relationships with external organisations

## Good practice statement

The company declares that it has no relationships with external organisations related to nutrition and health, and is transparent about their lobbying and political activities.

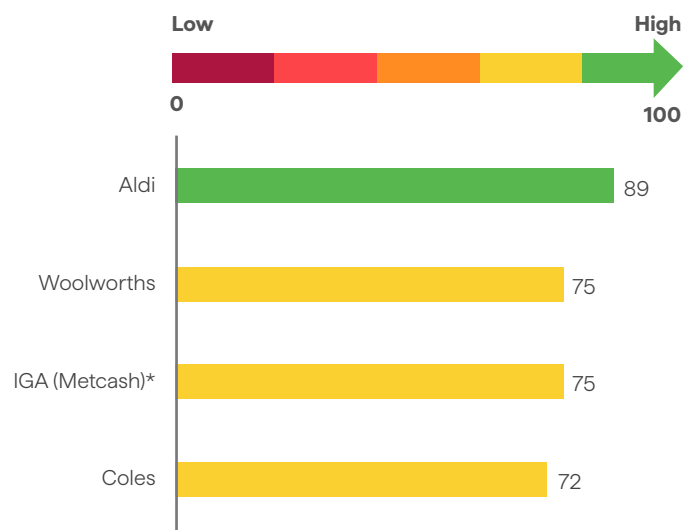
If relevant relationships with external organisations exist, the company adopts full transparency regarding the nature of these relationships (including funding amount if the support is financial in nature). This assists all stakeholders in understanding the relationships between different groups, the nature of lobbying and political activities, sponsorship arrangements, and potential sources of bias in research activities.

## Key findings

**All supermarkets generally adopt transparency around their relationships and support for external groups related to health and nutrition.**

- This was the best performing domain.
- All four supermarkets disclosed details of support or funding provided to philanthropic groups, nutrition education programs, active lifestyle, as well as engagements with public-private partnerships and industry associations. Aldi, in particular, noted no active relationships in professional organisations, external research, nutrition education and public-private partnerships related to nutrition in Australia.
- Aldi, IGA and Coles disclosed that no political donations were made in Australia in 2023.
- No company published submissions to public consultations regarding population nutrition policies (or submissions with which the company is associated, such as through industry associations).

Mean domain score: 78 / 100



\*Assessment based on publicly available information only

# Results by domain: Disclosure of relationships

## Key recommendations for the supermarket sector:

- 1 Publish** all relationships (including funding and support) with external groups (e.g., government agencies, professional organisations, research organisations, community and industry groups) related to health and nutrition
- 2 Disclose** all political donations in real time, or **commit** to not make political donations of any form
- 3 Disclose** submissions made to public consultations regarding population nutrition policies (e.g., nutrition labelling proposals), including submissions made by industry association groups of which they are a member

## Leading policy and practice examples

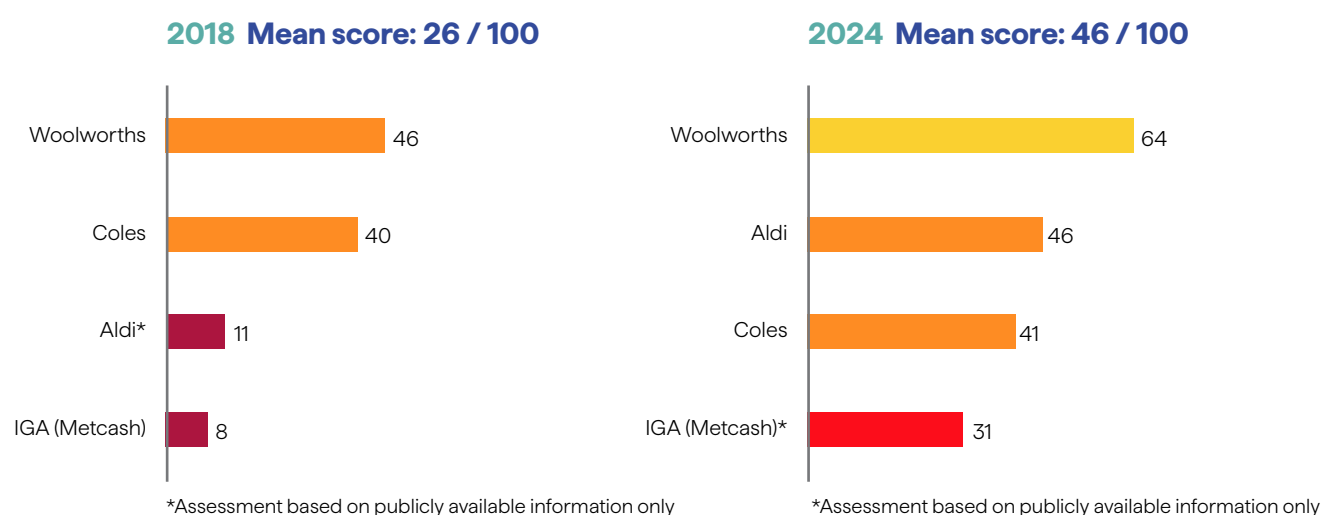
Indicator	Australian and international leading policy and practice examples
Disclosure and transparency of relationships with organisations related to health and nutrition, and lobbying practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Aldi, IGA and Coles</b> (Australia) report that no political donations were made in Australia in 2023.</li><li>• <b>Walmart</b> (international) publishes a searchable database of grants (over \$25,000) provided to organisations over the past 2 years, listing the organisation and size of grant provided.</li><li>• <b>PepsiCo</b> (food and beverage manufacturer, international) reports their support for philanthropic groups provided through their PepsiCo Foundation in a consolidated, publicly available document, including with details of the organisations supported and amount donated.</li><li>• <b>Unilever</b> (food manufacturer, international) discloses a comprehensive list of research publications related to nutrition (between 2009-2022) that have been supported by the company.</li></ul>

# Comparison to 2018 assessment

This study was a repeat of a similar assessment conducted in Australia in 2018. For the 2024 assessment, the scoring criteria were adapted to reflect progress in best practice benchmarks, based on changes to government regulation and industry practice in Australia and internationally. Updates to the criteria included:

- Additional indicators related to the reporting of company performance against commitments
- Revising *Nutrition Labelling* indicators to reflect updated government implementation guidelines and targets of the Health Star Rating system
- Revising the *Promotion Practices* domain to align with recently released guidelines from the World Health Organization and changes to the industry self-regulatory code.

Results of the 2018 assessment in comparison to the 2024 assessment are shown below:



Domain	Mean score (out of 100) of assessed companies across each domain	
	2018	2024
<b>A Corporate strategy</b>	47	64
<b>B Product formulation</b>	41	53
<b>C Nutrition labelling and information</b>	36	47
<b>D Promotion practices</b>	3	47
<b>E Product accessibility and affordability</b>	12	17
<b>F Disclosure of external relationships</b>	55	78

We found increases in the overall mean score (from 26/100 in 2018, to 46/100 in 2024) and the highest score achieved by a company (from 46/100 in 2018, to 64/100 in 2024). These results indicate some progress in the nutrition policies and practices of Australian supermarkets. Key sector-level changes that have occurred since the initial assessment in 2018 include:

- Stronger reporting of progress in healthier reformulation, including participation in the Healthy Food Partnership Reformulation Program and/or adoption of reformulation targets

- Improvements to policies to restrict marketing of unhealthy products to children, primarily due to changes to the industry's self-regulatory code
- A greater focus on promoting healthier products.

However, *Product Accessibility and Affordability* remained the worst performing domain, with little progress observed.

# Summary of recommended actions for the Australian supermarket sector

Domain	Recommended actions
<b>A</b> Corporate strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Set</b> a target to increase the proportion of overall sales from healthy products, and publicly report progress against this target each year</li> <li>● <b>Adopt</b> government-endorsed standards for defining healthy and unhealthy foods and brands</li> <li>● <b>Report</b> on governance arrangements that assign accountability for the company's nutrition-related commitments, policies and practices</li> </ul>
<b>B</b> Product formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Develop</b> and publicise specific, time-bound targets for reducing nutrients of concern (sodium, sugar, saturated fat, and artificially produced trans fat) and energy/portion sizes of own-brand products</li> <li>● Routinely <b>report</b> on progress towards commitments and targets. For example, report the nutritional content of own-brand products, by product category, including changes over time and with reference to government reformulation targets</li> <li>● <b>Reduce</b> the proportion of ultra-processed products in the company's own-brand product portfolio, for example, by adding healthy, minimally processed products and removing unhealthy product lines</li> <li>● <b>Work</b> with food manufacturers and suppliers to improve the healthiness of their products, in support of government targets and guidelines. For example, ensure contract negotiations with manufacturers and suppliers incentivise reformulation and new product development of healthier foods</li> </ul>
<b>C</b> Nutrition labelling & information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Implement</b> in-store and digital strategies to guide consumers to purchase healthier products by providing nutrition information and healthy eating education (e.g., displaying the Health Star Rating on in-store shelf tags and online across all products, ongoing nutrition initiatives on consumer-facing apps). <b>Monitor</b> and <b>report</b> the impact of these strategies on the healthiness of purchases</li> <li>● <b>Introduce</b> a policy to only make nutrition content claims (e.g., "99% fat free") on products that are classified as 'healthy' (using government guidelines for classifying product healthiness)</li> <li>● <b>Provide</b> comprehensive online nutrition information for all products</li> <li>● <b>Commit</b> to label artificially produced trans fat on all relevant products</li> <li>● <b>Incentivise</b> food manufacturers and suppliers to adopt the Health Star Rating on their products</li> </ul>
<b>D</b> Promotion practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Implement</b> policies to limit promotion of unhealthy products, and prioritise the promotion of healthy products across all settings (e.g., in-store, online, in weekly catalogues). This includes incentivising, for example, as part of contractual arrangements, food manufacturers and suppliers to prioritise promotional activities related to healthy foods and brands</li> <li>● <b>Eliminate</b> use of promotion techniques (e.g., cartoon characters, interactive games, collectible campaigns) with strong appeal to children, in relation to unhealthy products and brands</li> <li>● <b>Routinely report</b> on compliance with marketing policies, audited by an independent third party</li> </ul>
<b>E</b> Product accessibility & affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Remove</b> unhealthy products, such as confectionery and sugar-sweetened beverages, on displays near registers across all stores nationally</li> <li>● <b>Increase</b> the proportion of healthy products displayed in high-traffic areas (e.g., end-of-aisle displays and island bins)</li> <li>● <b>Restrict</b> price promotions (including discounts and multi-buy specials) on unhealthy products, and improve the affordability of healthy products through comprehensive policy and practice change</li> <li>● <b>Increase</b> the proportion of shelf and floor space dedicated to healthy categories and products</li> <li>● <b>Ensure</b> healthy products are widely available and equitably distributed across all geographic areas and store formats, particularly in rural/remote areas and lower-income communities</li> <li>● <b>Link</b> rewards and discounts through loyalty programs to encourage healthier purchases, and avoid linking rewards to unhealthy products and brands</li> </ul>
<b>F</b> Disclosure of relationships with external groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Publish</b> all relationships (including funding and support) with external groups (e.g., government agencies, professional organisations, research organisations, community and industry groups) related to health and nutrition</li> <li>● <b>Disclose</b> all political donations in real time, or <b>commit</b> to not make political donations</li> <li>● <b>Disclose</b> submissions made to public consultations regarding population nutrition policies (e.g., nutrition labelling proposals), including submissions made by industry association groups of which they are a member</li> </ul>

# Conclusions and implications

## Implications for Australian supermarkets

- There is increasing expectation from the general public, governments and investors for supermarkets to take strong action on nutrition and health.
- While there has been progress over time, much more substantial action is needed across the sector.
- All major retailers need to set company-wide targets to increase the proportion of overall sales from healthy products, and publicly report progress against targets each year.
- Concrete actions to improve the affordability of healthy food are urgently needed.
- Supermarkets have an opportunity to influence suppliers and food manufacturers across the supply chain to improve nutrition-related practices, including with respect to product development, nutrition labelling and promotion practices.
- Supermarkets can play a key role in supporting government efforts to improve population health, such as by publicly supporting implementation of globally recommended public health recommendations, being early adopters of voluntary government-led schemes, and refraining from lobbying activities that oppose or delay public health initiatives.

## Implications for Australian governments (Federal, State/Territory and local)

- Closely monitor supermarket policies and practices related to nutrition and food affordability, the extent to which supermarket commitments are implemented in practice, and the healthiness of supermarket environments.
- In line with key priorities specified in the National Obesity Strategy (2022-2032) and the National Preventive Health Strategy (2021-2030), **consider stronger policy intervention in the supermarket sector**, particularly where voluntary company actions have proved insufficient. Potential areas for action in supermarkets include healthy checkouts, price promotions on unhealthy food, and mandatory company reporting using evidence-based, nutrition-related metrics.

## Implications for the public health and research community

- Conduct repeat assessments of food industry policies and practices to monitor their progress over time compared with global best practice benchmarks.
- Increase collaboration between public health, research and civil society groups to strengthen efforts to hold industry to account.

## Implications for civil society and the broader community

- Use individual purchasing power to support companies that make it easier for Australians to access and choose healthy baskets of food.
- Be vocal in encouraging supermarkets to commit to healthy policies, and to make sure that they are implemented in practice.



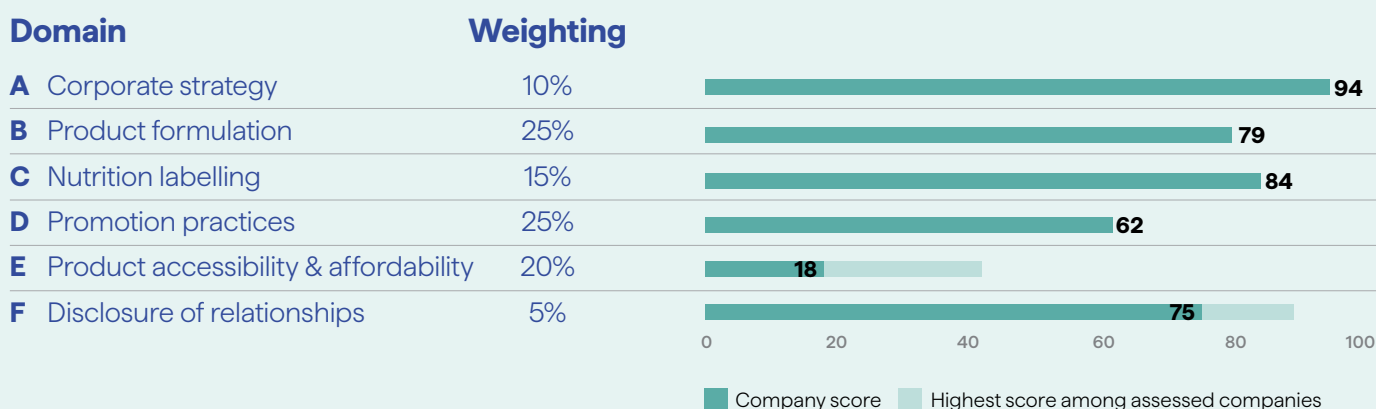
# Woolworths

1st

OUT OF 4  
SUPERMARKETS

64

OVERALL SCORE  
(OUT OF 100)



## Areas of strength

- **Corporate strategy** - Woolworths publicly commits that they are working to grow the proportion of sales from healthier products. Woolworths report progress against this target each year in their Sustainability Report. They define healthier products as those with a Health Star Rating (HSR) of 3.5 stars and above.
- **Product formulation** - Woolworths reports ongoing reformulation of their own-brand products. 79% of own-brand products meet the government's Healthy Food Partnership reformulation program targets.
- **Nutrition labelling** - In addition to displaying the HSR on all intended own-brand products, Woolworths displays HSRs on electronic in-store shelf labels, online and in catalogues. Woolworths' Food Tracker by HealthyLife provides information on the healthiness of consumer purchases with reference to the Australian Dietary Guidelines and highlights healthier product alternatives.
- **Accessibility & affordability** - Woolworths has removed children's confectionery from checkouts in all Woolworths supermarkets, and at least 80% of snacks placed at checkouts are healthier. Woolworths has also allocated greater shelf space for healthier products (HSR≥3.5) within end-of-aisle displays.
- Woolworths has taken steps to **encourage branded food manufacturers** to improve the healthiness of products and display the HSR on product packaging.

## Recommended actions for Woolworths

### Short term (next 12 months)

1. **Implement** policies to limit the marketing of unhealthy products and brands, and prioritise the promotion of healthy products and brands across all settings (e.g., in-store, online, in regular catalogues).
2. **Strengthen** current policies to reduce the exposure of children to unhealthy food marketing by applying the policies to children up to 18 years of age.

### Long term (2-3 years)

3. **Incentivise** purchasing of healthy products and their relative affordability by working with suppliers to increase price promotions on healthy products, limit price promotions on unhealthy products, and ensure that the regular retail price of healthier products are not more expensive than 'standard' products or less healthy alternatives.
4. **Reduce** the proportion of unhealthy products in the company's own-brand product portfolio. For example, by adding new, minimally-processed healthy products, and removing unhealthy product lines.
5. **Ensure** healthy/healthier products are widely available and equitably distributed across all geographic areas and store formats, particularly in rural/remote areas and lower-income communities.
6. **Monitor and report** the impact of current labelling, placement and nutrition education strategies on the healthiness of product sales and consumer purchases.

## HEALTHINESS OF OWN-BRAND PORTFOLIO<sup>^</sup>

Nutrient profiling summary score		Australian Dietary Guidelines	Extent of processing	Nutrition labelling
Average HSR (out of 5 stars)	Proportion HSR ≥ 3.5 (%)	Proportion discretionary (%)	Proportion ultra-processed (%)	HSR uptake for intended products (%)
3.4	63.2%	33.4%	53.3%	93.0%

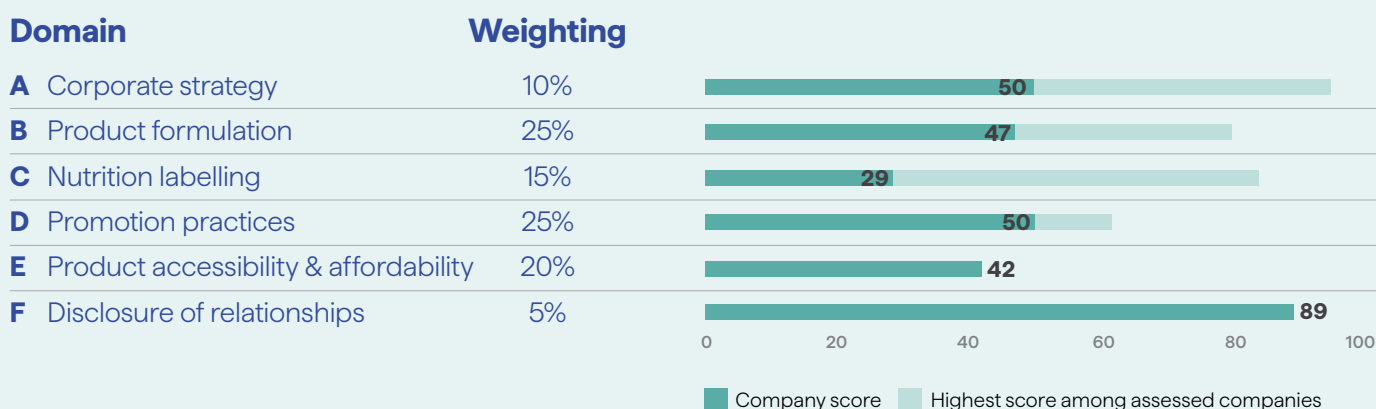
<sup>^</sup>This information is provided to add context around the assessed company; this analysis was not included in the assessment of nutrition policies. Results based on data collected by The George Institute for Global Health in March-June 2023 and published in [The State of the Food Supply Report 2023](#). HSR = Health Star Rating

# Appendix: Company scorecards

# Aldi

**2nd** OUT OF 4  
SUPERMARKETS

**46** OVERALL SCORE  
(OUT OF 100)



## Areas of strength

- **Corporate strategy** – Aldi publishes their commitment to improving population nutrition and health. They have substantially increased their nutrition-related capabilities in recent years.
- **Nutrition labelling** – Aldi commits to display HSR labelling on all eligible own-brand products.
- **Responsible promotion** – Aldi conducts limited in-store promotion of unhealthy products, and does not conduct promotional competitions or collectible campaigns. Aldi publicly pledges to dedicate the front three pages of regular catalogues to fresh food categories.
- **Accessibility & affordability** – Aldi has limited price promotions (such as multi-buy specials) for unhealthy products. In addition, Aldi reports having improved the healthiness of store formats by placing fresh, healthy foods at store entrances and restricting unhealthy products from end-of-aisle displays in all stores nationally.
- **Disclosure of relationships** – Aldi publishes a full list of philanthropic and active lifestyle groups it supports.

## Recommended actions for Aldi

### Short term (next 12 months)

1. **Publish** a target to increase the proportion of **overall** sales from healthy products, and publicly report progress against this target each year.
2. **Introduce** universal healthy checkouts (with no unhealthy products, such as confectionery and sugar-sweetened beverages on display near registers) across all stores nationally.
3. **Develop** and publicise specific, time-bound targets for reducing nutrients of concern (salt, sugar, saturated fat) and energy/portion sizes of own-brand products, in line with government targets and guidelines.
4. **Implement** policies to limit promotion of unhealthy products and brands across all settings (e.g., in-store, online, in regular catalogues).
5. **Provide** online nutrition information for all products available for sale.

### Long term (2-3 years)

6. **Reduce** the proportion of unhealthy products in the company's own-brand product portfolio. For example, by adding new, minimally-processed healthy products, and removing unhealthy product lines.
7. **Implement** in-store strategies to guide consumers to purchase healthier products, such as by displaying the HSR on in-store shelf tags. Monitor and report the impact of these strategies on the healthiness of consumer purchases.

## HEALTHINESS OF OWN-BRAND PORTFOLIO<sup>^</sup>

Nutrient profiling summary score		Australian Dietary Guidelines	Extent of processing	Nutrition labelling
Average HSR (out of 5 stars)	Proportion HSR ≥ 3.5 (%)	Proportion discretionary (%)	Proportion ultra-processed (%)	HSR uptake for intended products (%)
<b>2.9</b>	<b>45.6%</b>	<b>48.0%</b>	<b>63.8%</b>	<b>61.0%</b>

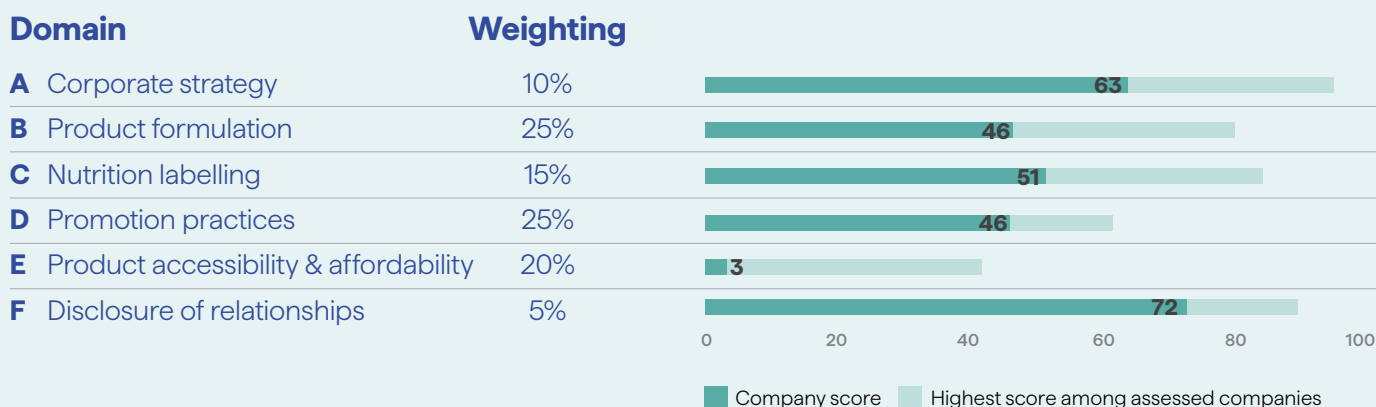
<sup>^</sup>This information is provided to add context around the assessed company; this analysis was not included in the assessment of nutrition policies. Results based on data collected by The George Institute for Global Health in March-June 2023 and published in [The State of the Food Supply Report 2023](#). HSR = Health Star Rating

# Appendix: Company scorecards

# Coles

**3rd** OUT OF 4 SUPERMARKETS

**41** OVERALL SCORE (OUT OF 100)



## Areas of strength

- **Corporate strategy** – Coles publicly reports the proportion of own-brand sales from healthy products.
- **Product formulation** – Coles discloses ongoing efforts to improve the healthiness of own-brand products, including that 78% of eligible own-brand products meet the government’s Healthy Food Partnership reformulation targets.
- **Nutrition labelling** – Coles commits to display on-package Health Star Ratings (HSR) and industrial trans fat labelling on all eligible own-brand products. In addition, Coles has implemented product filters for healthy foods and displays HSR on some products online.
- **Accessibility & affordability** – Through the Fly Buys loyalty program, Coles periodically offers price promotions to encourage healthier purchases, including for fresh fruit and vegetables.
- **Disclosure of relationships** – Coles commits not to make political donations, and publishes a comprehensive list of external groups related to nutrition and health that it supports.

## Recommended actions for Coles

### Short term (next 12 months)

1. **Publish** a target to increase the proportion of **overall** sales from healthy products, and publicly report progress against this target each year.
2. **Introduce** universal healthy checkouts (with no unhealthy products, such as confectionery and sugar-sweetened beverages on display near registers) across all stores nationally, and **increase** the proportion of healthy products displayed in end-of-aisle displays.
3. **Implement** policies to limit promotion of unhealthy products and brands across all settings (e.g., in-store, online, in regular catalogues).

### Longer term (2-3 years)

4. **Reduce** the proportion of unhealthy products in the company’s own-brand product portfolio. For example, by adding new, minimally-processed healthy products, and removing unhealthy product lines.
5. **Incentivise** branded food manufacturers and suppliers to improve the healthiness of their products, adopt the HSR on their products, and prioritise promotional activities related to healthy foods and brands.
6. **Restrict** price promotions (such as discounts and multi-buy specials) on unhealthy products, including as part of seasonal promotions.

## HEALTHINESS OF OWN-BRAND PORTFOLIO<sup>^</sup>

Nutrient profiling summary score		Australian Dietary Guidelines	Extent of processing	Nutrition labelling
Average HSR (out of 5 stars)	Proportion HSR ≥ 3.5 (%)	Proportion discretionary (%)	Proportion ultra-processed (%)	HSR uptake for intended products (%)
<b>3.3</b>	<b>59.0%</b>	<b>37.9%</b>	<b>59.0%</b>	<b>89.0%</b>

<sup>^</sup>This information is provided to add context around the assessed company; this analysis was not included in the assessment of nutrition policies. Results based on data collected by The George Institute for Global Health in March-June 2023 and published in [The State of the Food Supply Report 2023](#). HSR = Health Star Rating

## Appendix: Company scorecards

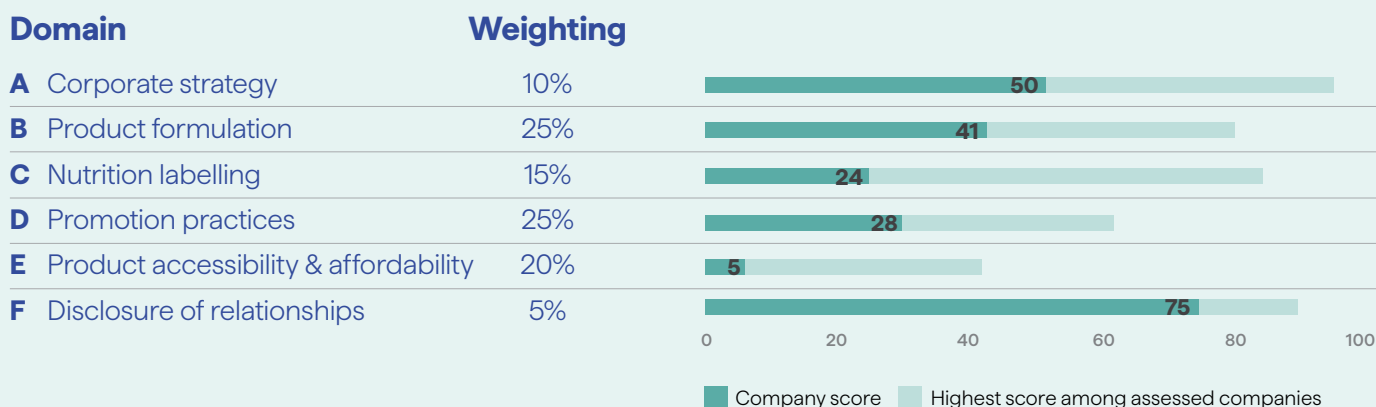
# IGA (Metcash)\*

4th

OUT OF 4  
SUPERMARKETS

31

OVERALL SCORE  
(OUT OF 100)



### Areas of strength

- **Corporate strategy** – IGA publishes their commitment to improving population nutrition and health.
- **Product formulation** – IGA reports reformulation efforts of their own-brand portfolio, including with reference to targets set by the government Healthy Food Partnership reformulation program. For healthier product development, IGA notes a focus on improving the Health Star Rating (HSR) of own-brand products to be equal to or higher than competing brands.
- **Nutrition labelling** – IGA commits to display HSRs on all eligible own-brand products by July 2025.
- **Disclosure of relationships** – IGA commits not to make political donations, and publishes comprehensive information of support and funding provided to external groups related to nutrition and health.

### Recommended actions for IGA

#### Short term (next 12 months)

1. **Set** a target to increase the proportion of **overall** sales from healthy products, and publicly report progress against this target each year.
2. **Introduce** universal healthy checkouts (with no unhealthy products, such as confectionery and sugar-sweetened beverages on display near registers) across all stores.
3. **Develop** and publicise specific, time-bound targets for reducing nutrients of concern (salt, sugar, saturated fat) and energy/portion sizes of own-brand products, in line with government targets and guidelines. Routinely **report** on the nutritional content of own-brand products including changes over time and with reference to government reformulation targets.
4. **Implement** policies to limit promotion of unhealthy products and brands across all settings (e.g., in-store, online, in regular catalogues).

#### Longer term (2-3 years)

5. **Reduce** the proportion of unhealthy products in the company's own-brand product portfolio. For example, by adding new, minimally-processed healthy products, and removing unhealthy product lines.
6. **Increase** the proportion of healthy products displayed in end-of-aisle displays, across all stores nationally.
7. **Restrict** price promotions (such as multi-buy specials) on unhealthy products, at any time of the year, including as part of seasonal promotions.

\*Assessment based on publicly available information only. Note that the IGA network is comprised of stores that are largely independently owned and operated, and individual store initiatives would not necessarily be reflected in the score or captured by the report.

### HEALTHINESS OF OWN-BRAND PORTFOLIO<sup>^</sup>

Nutrient profiling summary score		Australian Dietary Guidelines	Extent of processing	Nutrition labelling
Average HSR (out of 5 stars)	Proportion HSR ≥ 3.5 (%)	Proportion discretionary (%)	Proportion ultra-processed (%)	HSR uptake for intended products <sup>†</sup> (%)
3.3	62.4%	29.3%	43.2%	53.0%

<sup>^</sup>This information is provided to add context around the assessed company; this analysis was not included in the assessment of nutrition policies. Results based on data collected by The George Institute for Global Health in March-June 2023 and published in [The State of the Food Supply Report 2023](#).

<sup>†</sup>HSR = Health Star Rating. Information provided by company to the research team.

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This report includes data on product composition that was provided by The George Institute for Global Health.

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Professors Gary Sacks and Adrian Cameron were investigators in a previous NHMRC-funded trial (APP1133090) of healthy supermarket interventions in partnership with IGA, City of Greater Bendigo and VicHealth (2016-2019). Professor Gary Sacks, Jasmine Chan and Prof Adrian Cameron are researchers in a NHMRC-funded trial (2019/GNT1191897) that investigates the effectiveness of a nutrition-related intervention with food and beverage manufacturers and quick service restaurant companies in Australia and New Zealand. These trials were unrelated to the current project.



