

No sugar coating: New Zealanders want stronger government-led action on sugar

A report presenting the findings of the Scoop HiveMind on sugar and public health in New Zealand



**Have your say on sugar and obesity
in New Zealand**

With Scoop's new interactive
discussion platform – *HiveMind*



[Public Engagement Projects](#)

March 2017

Contents

1.	<i>Executive Summary</i>	3
2.	<i>Introduction</i>	5
2.1	<i>Information provision</i>	6
2.2	<i>Polis: the online platform that powers HiveMind</i>	6
2.3	<i>Structure of this report and its methodology</i>	7
3.	<i>Who took part</i>	9
4.	<i>Findings</i>	9
4.1	<i>Opinion groups</i>	9
4.2	<i>Analysis of the opinion groups</i>	9
4.3	<i>Analysis of the 'consensus'/'majority' comments</i>	12
4.4	<i>Some support for the NZDA's 'Consensus statement on sugary drinks'</i>	16
4.5	<i>Summary of findings</i>	17
5.	<i>Reflections about the HiveMind process</i>	17
5.1	<i>Representativeness</i>	18
5.2	<i>Independence</i>	18
5.3	<i>Early involvement</i>	18
5.4	<i>Influence</i>	19
5.5	<i>Transparency</i>	19
5.6	<i>Resource accessibility</i>	20
5.7	<i>Task definition</i>	20
5.8	<i>Structured decision making</i>	21
5.9	<i>Cost-effectiveness</i>	21
5.10	<i>Strengths of the Polis platform for the HiveMind process</i>	21
5.11	<i>Limitations of the Polis and the HiveMind process</i>	22
5.12	<i>Effectiveness of the process as a form of political inclusion</i>	23
5.12	<i>Recommendations for future HiveMinds</i>	23
6.	<i>Conclusion: A different call for action</i>	24
	<i>Appendix 1. Participant profile</i>	26
	<i>Appendix 2. Opinion groups</i>	27
	<i>Appendix 3. Support for statement / comments</i>	28

1. Executive Summary

HiveMind is Scoop's new public engagement platform, which is powered by Polis, a new advanced online survey tool for collecting, analysing and representing open-ended feedback from large groups of people. HiveMind initiatives aim to give New Zealanders a chance to co-create a more participatory and interactive public media. The use of Polis and similar analytic tools is a response to try and counter democratic deficits witnessed in New Zealand and other mature democracies. Such deficits are characterised by falling voter turnouts, declining levels of trust in democratic institutions and the crisis of organisational listening.

The sugar and public health HiveMind is a pilot project designed to test a new mode of political inclusion and to promote a citizenry that is actively involved in defining and addressing public issues. Such modes will be necessary if we are to successfully address the myriad wicked problems of our age. Such issues cannot be addressed by governments alone but will require a range of actors to work in the public interest.

Scoop choose the issue of high levels of sugar consumption in New Zealand and the dangers this poses to health and the associated costs to test a new interactive. The results of this four-week participatory initiative included agreement by participants:

- about the complex nature of the sugar problem
- that a range of interventions will be needed to address it
- that the current voluntary measures are not sufficient to address the sugar issue
- that the government should develop and use a range of stronger interventions aimed at:
 - reducing the consumption of sugar, especially amongst young people
 - ensuring everyone can access affordable and healthy food and drink
 - encouraging and directing innovation in products, processes and forms of communication that will lead to a reduction in sugar consumption

Participants strongly supported measures such as:

- the stricter regulation of the advertising and marketing of sugary drinks and junk food, especially to young people
- better education and consumer information
- measures that encourage and support more physical activity
- using regulation to reduce the amount of sugar in food and drink products, to encourage behaviour change and to direct and stimulate innovation.

Participants supported:

- the consideration of taxes and subsidies that work together to reduce sugar consumption and encourage the consumption of healthy food and drink while ensuring that healthy products are affordable.

Analysis of the data gives a clear indication that there is strong support for the government to act to address the sugar issue.

The success of Scoop's Polis experiment demonstrates that new processes and arenas can successfully bring together the informed opinions and views of a large numbers of

citizens to address today's complex problems. Tools such as Polis are far better able to help promote inclusion, listening, learning and the formation of a more nuanced and informed public opinion than conventional public engagement used by the media.

Scoop as an independent media organisation is well placed to host such processes and arenas with assistance from public engagement experts.

Scoop calls on policy and decision makers to consider and respond to the findings of this report.

2. Introduction

[‘No sugar coating: what should we do?’](#)¹ was Scoop’s first HiveMind exploration. Its purpose was two fold:

1. To find out if there was common ground amongst New Zealanders on what, if anything, should be done to reduce the consumption of sugar thereby reducing the number of overweight and obese people in New Zealand
2. To learn about engaging Scoops’ readers in policy issues using the mass online public participation platform Polis.

This report, documents and analyses this first HiveMind, which was launched on 1 December, 2016 and was actively promoted for 4 weeks. The exercise was a collaboration between one Scoop staff member and 3 volunteers: one from the [Scoop Foundation](#)² and two from [Public Engagement Projects](#).³

[HiveMind](#)⁴ is Scoop’s new public engagement platform. HiveMind initiatives aim to give New Zealanders a chance to co-create a more participatory and interactive public media. This is a response to the democratic deficits witnessed in New Zealand and other mature democracies and characterised by, amongst other things, falling voter turnouts and declining levels of trust in democratic institutions.

The HiveMind initiative is also a response to what has been described as “the new democratic deficit”⁵ and “a “crisis of listening” in organization-public communication”⁶. If organisations put as much effort into ‘listening’ as they currently do ‘talking’ multiple benefits could accrue. These include better customer service, improved trust in government and non-government organisations, productivity gains, increased employee satisfaction, and a reinvigorated civil society.⁷

The sugar and public health HiveMind pilots a new mode of political inclusion that encourages a citizenry to become actively involved in defining and addressing public issues. Such modes will be necessary if we are to successfully address the myriad wicked problems of our age. Such issues cannot be addressed by governments alone but will require a range of actors to work together in the public interest.

While the links between high levels of sugar consumption and a range of public health problems are clearly established, there is much less agreement about what more should be done to address the sugar problem, if anything. Sugar saturates so many food products and beverages that any measures may well have economic and social impacts that are not always obvious or fairly distributed. Experts alone cannot solve the sugar problem. It is an issue that requires values-based judgments about society’s goals and

¹ <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL1612/S00001/no-sugar-coating-what-should-we-do.htm>

² <https://foundation.scoop.co.nz/>

³ <http://pep.org.nz/>

⁴ <http://info.scoop.co.nz/HiveMind>

⁵ Dobson, A. 2012. Listening: The New Democratic Deficit, *Political Studies*, vol 60, 843-859

⁶ Macnamara, J. (2016). The Work and ‘Architecture of Listening’: Addressing Gaps in Organization-Public Communication, *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 10:2, 133-148, DOI:

10.1080/1553118X.2016.1147043

⁷ *Ibid*

the trade-offs necessary to achieve them. It is also an issue that may well require significant changes in behaviour and attitudes.

2.1 Information provision

For the sugar and public health HiveMind, Scoop provided detailed information to participants about the topic and possible approaches to it. Approaches are ways in which people frame their thinking as how to characterise a problem, who might be responsible and how to fix it. People are not always aware of the frames they bring to issues. The approaches were:

1. Free to choose
2. Personal responsibility
3. Consumer interests before profit
4. Health science
5. Correct the drivers of inequality
6. Tangata Whenua

Scoop 'seeded' the HiveMind with a selection of 30 statements/comments from across the approaches.

2.2 Polis: the online platform that powers HiveMind

HiveMind initiatives are powered by [Polis](#),⁸ a new advanced online survey tool for collecting, analysing and representing open-ended feedback from large groups of people. It combines qualitative and quantitative research methods and has been designed to enable mass participation.

Polis presents participants with comments to vote on one-at-a-time in a randomised order. Participants can 'agree', 'disagree' or 'pass'. Scoop 'seeded' the HiveMind with 30 initial comments. Participants could also enter their own comments for other participants to vote on.

Polis uses real-time, artificial intelligence to generate opinion groups using the following criteria:

1. Each opinion group is made up of several participants who vote similarly on multiple comments.
2. Each group of participants who voted similarly will have also voted distinctly differently from other groups.

Polis needs approximately 200 participants to each vote on at least 7 comments for its analysis to work properly.

Polis also identifies 'majority' or 'consensus' comments that are supported across all opinion groups.

Polis represents opinion groups to participants as they take part via a data visualisation. The visualisation shows a representation of the opinion groups and of the user in relation to them. As a user votes on comments, their representation moves towards the

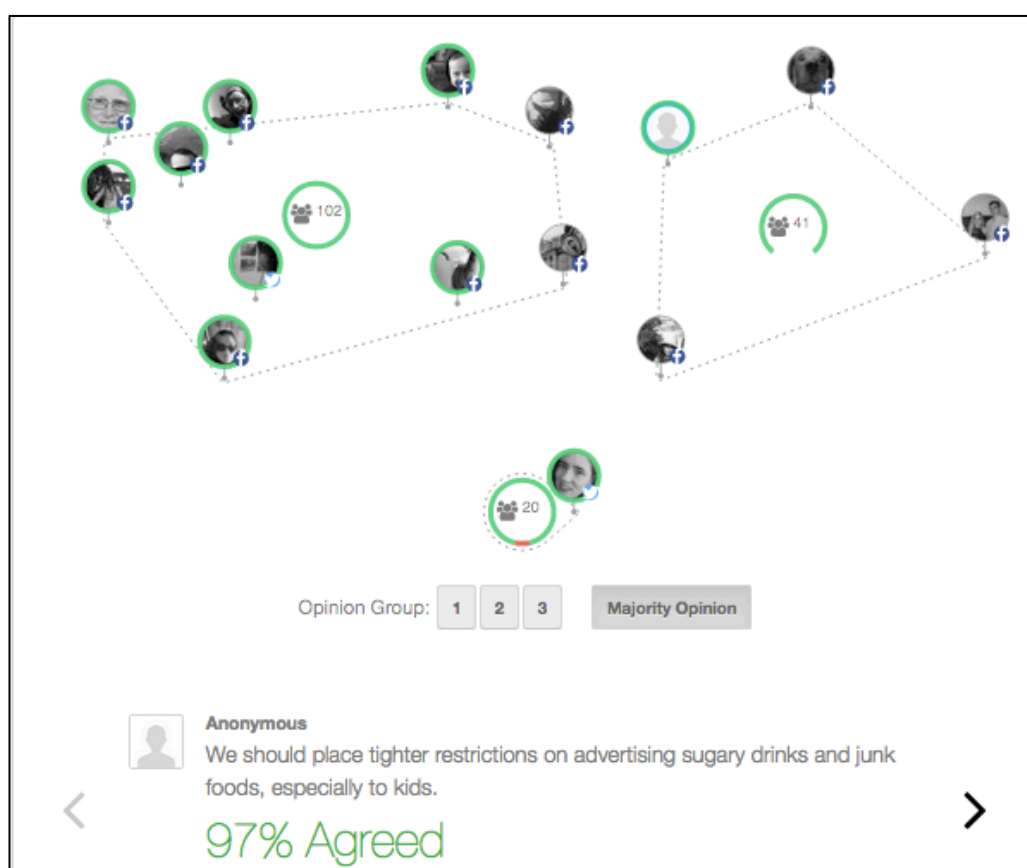
⁸ <https://pol.is/>

group that is made of people with similar voting patterns. Users can explore the comments that constitute each opinion group and 'majority' comments. The visualisation shows the number of people in each opinion group and the levels of 'agreement', 'disagreement' and 'passing' for:

- up to 5 of the most agreed or disagreed comments for each opinion group
- up to 5 of the most agreed majority comments and up to 5 of the most disagreed majority comments.

A screen shot of the visualisation taken towards the end of the sugar and public health HiveMind is presented below.

Polis administrators have access to the raw data collected by Polis. Administrators can also access the more detailed analyses that support the public-facing data visualisations.



2.3 Structure of this report and its methodology

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

Section	Description
3.	Details about the recruitment strategy and a profile of the participants
4.	A thematic analysis and interpretation of the results
5.	Reflections about the HiveMind process
6.	Conclusion: A different call for action

Section 4 presents a thematic analysis and interpretation of the results of the sugar and public health HiveMind, and focuses first on the opinion groups and emergent themes, and then considers 'consensus'/'majority' comments. Finally, the findings from the analysis of the opinion groups and the majority comments are then brought together.

For the analysis presented in section 4:

- 'consensus' / 'majority' comments are comments that were agreed by at least 75% of participants. This level of agreement requires support from across the opinion groups.
- comments have generally been excluded from this analysis if fewer than 30% of participants (c.50 participants) voted on them except for when they relate to other comments.
- comments shaded in green are those identified by Polis as either one of the top 5 most agreed 'majority' comments or as one of the top 5 most disagreed 'majority' comments.
- some of the reported percentages of votes that 'agree', 'disagree' and 'passed' do not sum to 100% because of rounding errors.

Section 5 presents reflections about the HiveMind process by assessing it as a public participation exercise against success criteria developed by Rowe, Frewer and Marsh (2004)⁹; that is, representativeness, independence, early involvement, influence, transparency, resource accessibility, task definition, structured decision making and cost effectiveness.

It includes commentary about the strengths and limitations of Polis, and about the effectiveness of the process as a form of political inclusion. Section 5 concludes with recommendations for improving future HiveMind initiatives.

Section 6 presents some conclusions about the significance of Scoop's HiveMind initiative as well as some key messages about what should be done to address the sugar issue and other similarly complex issues.

⁹ Rowe, Marsh & Frewer (2004), 'Evaluation of a deliberative conference', *Science, Technology and Human Values*, Vol 29(1), Winter, pp. 88-121

3. Who took part

Scoop wanted a broad cross section of its readership, as well as other New Zealanders to take part in the sugar and public health HiveMind. To achieve this, Scoop identified a long list of organisations that might have an interest either in the topic or the idea of democratic participation and invited them and their networks to take part. Scoop also encouraged participation through advertising on its website and using its social media channels.

256 people took part in the sugar and public health HiveMind and cast 7,695 votes. 160 people voted often enough for their voting patterns to be included in the analysis. In addition to the 30 seed comments entered by Scoop, 84 other comments were posted by 43 people.

See the 'Participant Profile' box for details about the participants and Appendix 1 for further information about how participants responded to demographic statements.

Participant Profile

- 44% male
- 43% female
- 75% Pakeha/European
- 3% Pasifika
- 2% Māori
- 4% Asian
- 75% live in cities
- 42% of participants identified themselves as parents
- 38% had been or were currently overweight
- About half of the participants actively avoid sugary food and drink

4. Findings

Section 4 presents an analysis and interpretation of the results of the sugar and public health HiveMind.

4.1 Opinion groups

The following opinion groupings emerged from an analysis of voting patterns. See Appendix 2 for detailed information about the opinion groups and the comments that constitute them.

Opinion group	Number of participants	Proportion of participants
1. Acknowledge the problem but are unsure how it should be addressed	39	24%
2. Support more government action	101	63%
3. Women who are concerned about the impacts of sugar taxes	20	13%

4.2 Analysis of the opinion groups

The following themes were identified:

- the sugar problem needs to be addressed fairly urgently
- the sugar problem will not be solved without regulation
- the Government should act more boldly and with more urgency
- taxes and subsidises should be considered to improve consumption patterns
- there is concern about the impact of taxes on low-income people
- education programmes are supported that will help lower sugar consumption.

4.2.1 The sugar problem needs to be addressed fairly urgently

A large majority of people in Group 1 (96%) and Group 2 (75%) agreed that the overconsumption of sugar and the associated impacts on public health are problems that need to be addressed fairly urgently. 52% of people in Group 3 disagreed with this statement, with 35% agreeing and 13% passed.

Across all participants, in all groups, 82% agreed that the sugar and obesity problem needs to be addressed fairly urgently.

ID#	Comment	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Overall
#009	The sugar and obesity problem needs to be addressed fairly urgently	75% agree 10% disagree 15% passed	96% agree 2% disagree 1% passed	35% agree 52% disagree 13% passed	82% agree 11% disagree 6% passed 73% voted

4.2.2 The sugar problem will not be solved without regulation

A common argument against regulation is that people should be free to decide what they consume so long as they do not harm others. Across all groups, 75% of respondents did not agree with this argument. A reason they gave for rejecting this argument is that the cost of healthcare associated with the overconsumption of sugar is largely borne by taxpayers.

ID#	Comment	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Overall
#041	It is difficult to say give people autonomy to decide with no regulation when society has to pay in the health care costs of obesity	42% agree 20% disagree 38% passed	89% agree 1% disagree 10% passed	48% agree 38% disagree 14% passed	75% agree 12% disagree 11% passed 53% voted

4.2.3 The Government should act more boldly and with more urgency

Across all participants in all groups, 79% agreed that the government needs to act much more boldly and with much more urgency, with the strongest support (92%) coming from Group 2. Almost half the people in Group 3 also supported the need for more urgent and bold government action and about half the people in Group 1 are unsure.

ID#	Comment	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Overall
#020	The NZ government needs to act much more boldly and with much more urgency	22% agree 30% disagree 48% passed	92% agree 0% disagree 7% passed	48% agree 38% disagree 14% passed	79% agree 7% disagree 13% passed 68% voted

4.2.4 Taxes and subsidises should be considered to improve consumption patterns

About three-quarters of participants across all groups support a combination of taxes and subsidies to respectively reduce sugar consumption and increase the consumption of healthy food and drinks (#058 and #022). Fewer people (64% overall) support the use of a sugar tax alone (#042).

Over 90% of Group 2 agrees with the use of taxes and subsidies to reduce the consumption of sugar-rich food in favour of healthier alternatives. People in Groups 1

and 3 tend to disagree or pass on this approach, however, their responses to the two most relevant comments (#058 and #022) are inconsistent. Even though both comments advocate using taxes and subsidies, it is well known that the way a statement is worded can elicit different responses¹⁰.

Given that a significant proportion of people in Groups 1 and 3 were unsure (38% passed on #022) about the use of taxes and subsidies, some may be persuaded to support fiscal measures in the future.

See sections 4.3.4 for more analysis of fiscal measures.

ID#	Comment	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Overall
042	The govt MUST impose a sugar tax on all artificially sweetened & fizzy drinks reducing the social and economic cost of obesity illnesses	35% agree 40% disagree 25% passed	75% agree 3% disagree 22% passed	16% agree 75% disagree 8% passed	64% agree 19% disagree 16% passed 58% voted
058	Higher tax on high sugar foods, which can then be used to subsidise the ridiculous cost of healthy foods like fruit, vegetables and meat!!!	42% agree 20% disagree 38% passed	91% agree 1% disagree 7% passed	10% agree 80% disagree 10% passed	77% agree 14% disagree 8% passed 46% voted
022	We should use food taxes and subsidies to encourage the consumption of health food and discourage the consumption of unhealthy foods	20% agree 42% disagree 38% passed	91% agree 1% disagree 7% passed	46% agree 16% disagree 38% passed	76% agree 8% disagree 15% passed 69% voted

4.2.5 Concern about the impact of taxes on low-income people

Opinion group 3 (a group of 20 women) were specifically concerned about the financial consequences of a sugar tax, especially for low-income people and families. Such a tax would likely increase the price of many food products and beverages. This concern was not shared by half the people in Group 2 and a quarter of people in Group 1. A significant proportion of people in Groups 1 and 2 did not take a position.

ID#	Comment	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Overall
#031	It is unfair to financially harm low income people, especially Māori, by using taxes to increase the price of food and drink	26% agree 26% disagree 48% passed	16% agree 52% disagree 32% passed	82% agree 0% disagree 17% passed	27% agree 43% disagree 28% passed 72% voted

Approximately a quarter of participants were divided on whether it is unfair to financially harm low-income people by. Fiscal measures might gain more support if designed not to make feeding families more expensive.

¹⁰ This can be seen very clearly for Group 3 with 80% disagreeing with comment #058 but only 16% disagreeing with comment #022. It may be that people in Group 3 reacted strongly against the phrase “the ridiculous cost of healthy foods” in comment #058 while being much more supportive of the more ‘neutrally’ worded comment #022. Across all participants, 76% supported fiscal measures as described in comment #022 with 15% passing and 8% against.

4.2.6 Support for education programmes

Although people in Group 1 are generally uncertain about what actions should be taken to address the sugar problem, they do support education programmes along with the majority of people in all other groups. Overall, 89% of respondents agree with resourcing science-based programmes for young people on how to grow and make their own food.

ID#	Comment	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Overall
#035	Resource programs which enable young people to grow and create their own food and understand the science behind how it all works	85% agree 0% disagree 15% passed	91% agree 1% disagree 7% passed	56% agree 16% disagree 28% passed	89% agree 1% disagree 8% passed 63% voted

4.3 Analysis of the 'consensus'/'majority' comments

The following themes were identified from an analysis of the 'consensus'/'majority' comments:

- a combination of new interventions is needed to address this complex issue
- a partnership / collaborative approach is needed
- reduce the consumption of sugar, especially amongst young people
- ensure access to affordable, healthy food and drink
- more physical activity should be supported
- regulate the advertising and marketing of sugary drinks and junk food
- better education and consumer information
- regulate to reduce the amount of sugar in products and to encourage process and product innovation.

4.3.1 A combination of new interventions is needed to address this complex issue

The overwhelming majority of participants believe that too many people are overweight and obese, and that this is a real, and complex problem that requires collective action and a combination of interventions. 76% of participants disagreed that "[t]he "obesity epidemic" is unscientific nonsense". These participants rejected the idea that the drive to act on sugar and obesity is based on a "bias against fat people".

#010	65% voted	The rapid rise of obesity is also about changes in the way we live as a society and in what we eat so we need to address a range of these matters	87% agree 3% disagree 8% passed
#037	65% voted	The "obesity epidemic" is unscientific nonsense. Discussions starting from "being fat is unhealthy" only encourage bias against fat people	12% agree 76% disagree 10% passed

Participants did not believe that current initiatives on their own encourage individuals to lead healthier lifestyles are sufficient. They did not accept that voluntary measures by the food and beverage industry to produce healthier products and consumer information are sufficient. They considered that more regulation is needed and that sugar needs to be taxed. Reasons for this include the belief that sugar is addictive and that the food and beverage industry is more interested in profits than the interests of consumers. Also the consumption of the food and beverage industry's products ultimately result in a significant cost to the public health system. There is also support

for interventions that go beyond regulations and fiscal measures and address the drivers of social inequality.

#034	75% voted	Current initiatives aiming to encourage individuals to lead healthier lifestyles and the food and beverage industry to voluntarily provide healthier products and consumer information are sufficient - we do not need to regulate.	8% agree 80% disagree 10% passed
#044	48% voted	Sugar needs to be regulated and taxed.	76% agree 9% disagree 14% passed
#080	25% voted	The cost of diabetes will be \$1.8 billion by 2021. This should be taken into account when lack of harm to others is being considered.	80% agree 10% disagree 10% passed
#041	53% voted	It is difficult to say give people autonomy to decide with no regulation when society has to pay in the health care costs of obesity	75% agree 12% disagree 11% passed
#100	19% voted	My opinion on the food industry is, comparable to the cigarette companies using nicotine to attract people smoking as to sugar does for food	74% agree 3% disagree 22% passed
#072	37% voted	If "enlightened self-interest" worked, manufacturers would already have acted for the long-term good of their customers.	78% agree 11% disagree 10% passed
#016	71% voted	The significant increase in sugar in food and drinks is there to make food and drink more appealing and addictive hence increase sales revenue.	85% agree 2% disagree 12% passed
#026	75% voted	interventions need to go beyond the regulation of sugar and address the drivers of inequality.	79% agree 9% disagree 11% passed

4.3.2 A partnership / collaborative approach is needed

Participants across all opinion groups consider that a collaborative approach is needed to reduce sugar consumption and improve the wellbeing of New Zealanders. To achieve this, the Crown should work in partnership with Māori and the government should work with the food and beverage industry. All interventions should be developed in collaboration with communities.

#029	65% voted	The Crown also has a duty to ensure Māori health protection measures are done in partnership with Māori.	78% agree 6% disagree 14% passed
#065	44% voted	The Govt should work with the food & beverage industry to make NZ a global leader in solving obesity via new products & marketing approaches	76% agree 14% disagree 9% passed
#027	66% voted	Interventions must be developed in collaboration with communities so that they are effective and take their interests into account	80% agree 7% disagree 12% passed

4.3.3 Reduce the consumption of sugar, especially amongst young people

There was very strong support (89%) for the goal of reducing the consumption of sugar, especially amongst young people.

#021	71% voted	Reducing the intake of sugar should be Government policy goal - especially for children and teenagers.	89% agree 5% disagree 5% passed
------	--------------	--	---------------------------------------

4.3.4 Ensure access to affordable, healthy food and drink

The affordability of healthy food and drink was of significant concern to many participants. Supporters of this position would urge the New Zealand government that it ensures New Zealanders are able to access and afford healthy food and drink.

An insufficient number of participants voted on a proposal to remove GST from healthy, basic foods to draw any inferences.

#025	68% voted	We should make sure that people can afford healthy food and drinks and families have enough time to prepare healthy meals.	88% agree 2% disagree 9% passed
#096	21% voted	Something is wrong when 'pop' is cheaper than water or milk.	94% agree 2% disagree 2% passed
#063	43% voted	Fresh, good quality NZ produce should be more affordable to buy in NZ than overseas.	82% agree 7% disagree 10% passed
#059	49% voted	Legislation to provide drinking water fountains at all schools from early childhood to high schools.	81% agree 6% disagree 12% passed
#058	46% voted	Higher tax on high sugar foods, which can then be used to subsidise the ridiculous cost of healthy foods like fruit, vegetables and meat!!!	77% agree 14% disagree 8% passed
#095	18% voted	Take GST off healthy basic foods, that put 15% back into pockets immediately making good food more attractive,	72% agree 13% disagree 13% passed

4.3.5 More physical activity should be supported

Participants would support interventions that encourage more physical activity, including those that promote more active forms of transport such as walking and cycling. Measures to support traditional Māori activities such as māra kai (vegetable gardens) should also be considered.

#040	63% voted	Redesign our obesogenic environment to make walking and cycling easy and attractive. Improve footpaths & cycle paths & lower traffic speeds.	82% agree 6% disagree 10% passed
#032	76% voted	Encourage Māori to set up māra kai (vegetable gardens) and teach gardening and cooking skills with a wider range of healthier methods	76% agree 5% disagree 17% passed

4.3.6 Regulate the advertising and marketing of sugary drinks and junk food

The most widely agreed intervention was to ban or restrict the advertising and marketing of sugary drinks and junk food, especially to young people (#036, #023, #017). Measures could include a ban on the point-of-sale promotion of high-sugar items and rules on where unhealthy products can be displayed in shops and supermarkets (#024, #094).

#036	65% voted	We should place tighter restrictions on advertising sugary drinks and junk foods, especially to kids.	97% agree 0% disagree 1% passed
------	--------------	---	---------------------------------------

#023	73% voted	We should impose restrictions on junk food marketing, particularly to children	94% agree 1% disagree 4% passed
#017	73% voted	We should ban or restrict the marketing of sugary drinks and food to children and teenagers.	90% agree 2% disagree 6% passed
#024	71% voted	We should impose a ban on point of sale promotion of high sugar items in supermarkets	76% agree 8% disagree 14% passed
#094	25%	Supermarket layouts strongly influence peoples' food purchases.	77% agree 10% disagree 12% passed

4.3.7 Better education and consumer information

There was strong support for educational and consumer information initiatives (#018). Topics that should be promoted included information about the health impacts of sugar, such as type-2 diabetes and its links to obesity and lack of exercise (#074), as well as practical knowledge like healthier cooking methods (#032). There was also support for ideas that would promote more effective and simple consumer product labelling and information including a 'traffic light' (#078) or a 'teaspoons equivalent' (#097) system. Whatever system is used should be able to account for the different types of sugar that are present (#101, #088).

#018	67% voted	We need to invest in better information and education about the health impacts of sugar	83% agree 6% disagree 10% passed
#074	36% voted	Also need better education in schools on metabolic diseases such as type-2 diabetes and its links to obesity and lack of exercise.	75% agree 10% disagree 13% passed
#032	73% voted	Encourage Māori to set up māra kai (vegetable gardens) and teach gardening and cooking skills with a wider range of healthier methods	76% agree 5% disagree 17% passed
#078	36% voted	We should provide a simple information system such as traffic light to indicate quantity and type of sugar	77% agree 8% disagree 13% passed
#097	20% voted	Sugar labelled in teaspoons is a better method of labelling	72% agree 6% disagree 21% passed
#101	20% voted	We need a 'sugar equivalent' indicator on labelling to account for effects of different types of sugar	60% agree 18% disagree 21% passed
#088	23% voted	A Traffic light sugar warning system won't work as there are many types of sugars which are present in ratios. Manufacturers use this fact.	36% agree 21% disagree 42% passed

4.3.8 Regulate to reduce the amount of sugar in products and to direct innovation

79% of participants agreed with forcing the food and beverage industry to reduce the sugar content of its products through government regulation (#019). There is even more support (89%) for regulating the amount of sugar in products for babies and toddlers (#077). Regulation, or the threat of it, is seen by 88% of participants as a potential way of driving innovation in the food and beverage industry towards healthier products (#066). There is an opportunity for New Zealand to becoming a "global leader in solving obesity via new products & marketing approaches" (#065).

#077	36% voted	Need to regulate the amount of sugar in baby/toddler foods so that children aren't habituated to mainly eating sweet foods from birth	89% agree 0% disagree 10% passed
#019	71% voted	We should regulate the food and beverage industry to force them to lower the amount of sugar in food and drinks	79% agree 11% disagree 9% passed
#066	44% voted	Regulation, or the threat of it, should be used to drive and direct innovation in the food and beverage industry towards healthier products	88% agree 2% disagree 8% passed
#065	44% voted	The Govt should work with the food & beverage industry to make NZ a global leader in solving obesity via new products & marketing approaches	76% agree 14% disagree 9% passed

4.4 Some support for the NZDA's 'Consensus statement on sugary drinks'

During the sugar and public health HiveMind, the New Zealand Dentists Association (NZDA) and partner organisations published a list of 7 actions to inform the public about the negative health impacts of sugary drinks and to advocate for population-wide strategies to reduce sugary drink consumption.¹¹ Although it appears that there may be high-levels of support (75%) for the 7 actions being implemented together, too few (17%) HiveMind participants voted on this proposition (#015) to be confident about this conclusion.

#105	17% voted	The government should adopt the 7 actions of the New Zealand Dentists Association 'Consensus statement on Sugary drinks' as outlined here: http://www.healthysmiles.org.nz/assets/pdf/Consensus%20Statement%20on%20Sugary%20Drinks.pdf	75% agree 0% disagree 25% passed
------	--------------	--	--

The table below shows that four of the NZDA's 7 proposed actions broadly align with HiveMind findings. Three of the NZDA's actions were not specifically considered during the HiveMind process.

NZDA Consensus Actions	HiveMind findings
1. Joint advocacy campaign aimed at Government and the beverage industry to introduce a sugar icon on the packaging of all sugary drinks to indicate the amount of sugar in each product in teaspoons.	Either a 'traffic light' or a 'teaspoons equivalent' method of consumer information was seen as simpler and more effective for product labels (see section 4.3.7).
2. Introduction of mandatory regulation of marketing of sugary drinks to children through independent monitoring and evaluation of food marketing, especially at times and places frequented by children such as children's sports and events.	Over 90% of participants agreed with regulating the advertising and marketing of sugary drinks and junk food, especially to young people (see section 4.3.6).
3. Introduction of daily allowance for the intake of free sugars for New Zealanders, in line with the recommendations from the WHO.	Not considered.

¹¹ <http://www.asms.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Consensus-Statement-on-Sugary-Drinks.pdf>

<p>4. Encourage the public to switch their sugary drinks to water by;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. introduction of warning labels linking overconsumption of sugary drinks to poor health. b. expansion of successful nation-wide social marketing campaigns such as 'Switch to Water'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 75% of participants supported education and consumer information initiatives (not specifically labelling) that linked consuming sugar to its health impacts (see section 4.3.7) • 72% of participants agreed that large-scale marketing campaigns were needed to change the way people think about and consume sugary products (#090).
<p>5. Encourage schools and early learning services to adopt 'water-only' policies.</p>	<p>Not considered.</p>
<p>6. Development of policies by local government to introduce 'water-only' policies at council venues, events and limit the sale of sugary drinks in and around schools.</p>	<p>Not considered.</p>
<p>7. Joint advocacy campaign, aimed at government, to introduce an excise tax on sugary drinks consistent with the WHO guidelines.</p>	<p>While the NZDA/WHO sugar tax proposal was not specifically considered, there are good levels of support for the idea of a sugar tax, although some people are strongly opposed. More people would likely be supportive if measures were also taken to make healthy food and drink more affordable. (see sections 4.2.4, 4.2.5, 4.3.4).</p>

4.5 Summary of findings

The following list is a high-level summary of the findings of section 4:

- the sugar problem needs to be addressed fairly urgently
- a combination of new interventions is needed to address this complex issue
- a partnership / collaborative approach is needed between Maori, the government, industry and citizens
- the Government should act more boldly and with more urgency. The sugar problem will not be solved without regulation. Regulation is a way to reduce the amount of sugar in products, encourage behaviour change and to direct innovation
- reduce the consumption of sugar, especially amongst young people
- ensure access to affordable, healthy food and drink
- very strong support for the stricter regulation of the advertising and marketing of sugary drinks and junk food
- strong support for better education and consumer information, and measures that encourage and support more physical activity
- there is support for taxes and subsidises
- concern about the impact of taxes on low-income people and families
- there is broad support for four of the seven actions demanded by the New Zealand Dentists Association and partner organisations in their 'Consensus statement on sugary drinks'.¹²

5. Reflections about the HiveMind process

The second main purpose of this HiveMind was to learn about hosting an online participation process on a major public policy issue using Polis. This section assesses the HiveMind against the public participation criteria set out below. It also assesses the

¹² <http://www.asms.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Consensus-Statement-on-Sugary-Drinks.pdf>

strengths and limitations of Polis and concludes with some recommendations for future HiveMinds.

5.1 Representativeness

The participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the affected population.

The sugar and public health issue affects almost every part of New Zealand society so the HiveMind participants should ideally form a broadly representative sample of the New Zealand population.

From the limited demographic data that was collected (see section 3 and Appendix 1), participants were broadly representative in terms of the balance between male and female, the proportion who identified as Pakeha/European and the proportion who live in urban areas. Māori, Pacific and Asian peoples were, however, under-represented. No data was collected for the age distribution of participants or their geographical distribution. Too few overweight and obese people took part (35% of participants versus 67% in the population).

5.2 Independence

The participation process should be conducted in an independent (unbiased) way.

Scoop is a leading NZ-based news organisation, which values its independence strongly. The sugar and public health Hivemind was not requested, commissioned, shaped or funded by any external organisation or interests.

While Scoop's editorial stance tends to focus on the social and environmental dimensions of news stories more than other media organisations in New Zealand, every effort was made to ensure that all perspectives were fairly represented. The HiveMind initiative was concerned to ensure that:

- participants were provided with information which reflects the multiple dimensions of the sugar and health debate
- respect was shown for people with different views
- opportunities were provided for learning about the complexities of the issue.

No complaints were received about Scoop's comment moderation or any bias in its presentation or administration.

5.3 Early involvement

The participants should be involved as early as possible in the process, as soon as value judgments become salient.

While Scoop shaped the exploration by providing information resources and by adding the first 30 comments for participants to vote on, participants were also able to shape the exercise by adding their own comments. While this feature means that participants can choose to add any idea or perspective for others to judge, comments that are added in the later stages of the exercise when participation rates tend to drop off, do not

receive as much attention as earlier comments. For example, socio-cultural perspectives were missed when preparing the information resources and seed comments

Early engagement with interested parties to ensure that no major perspectives or seed comments are missed would help to overcome this problem and also help recruit people into the process and early participation.

5.4 Influence

The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy.

The findings of the sugar and public health HiveMind will be published by Scoop. Scoop will also forward these to policy and decisions makers including relevant Government ministers as well as opposition MPs.

In addition to the procedure influencing policy and decision-making, participants should feel that the organisers (Scoop) and their fellow participants considered their input. This is likely to encourage continued participation.

Polis records and analyses all votes and comments. However, participants may not see how others are responding to their own comments if they are not visualised as ‘majority’ comments or as comments that make up an opinion group. Polis should consider enabling participants to track how their own comments are being responded to and how they fit with overall opinion.

5.5 Transparency

The process should be transparent so that the relevant population can see what is going on and how decisions are being made.

Scoop published information that described:

- the purpose of HiveMind explorations
- scoop’s reasons for the HiveMind initiative
- the Polis platform and how it works
- scoop’s terms and conditions of use
- how Scoop would use the collected data
- scoop’s moderation policy
- scoop’s complaints and enquiries procedure.

Scoop has not scrutinised the programming and logics used by Polis. Polis is, however, an open source platform and its underlying programming is open to third-party scrutiny.

Two distinguishing features of Polis are that it identifies both opinion groups and ‘majority’ / ‘consensus’ comments. The data visualisation currently displays:

- up to 5 comments that best define each opinion group
- up to 5 comments that are most widely agreed and up to 5 comments that are most widely disagreed for the majority opinion

It may be reasonable to ‘compress’ the data by limiting the number of comments for the public visualisation as this makes the visualisation easier to understand. However, the Polis platform should provide the host organisation/administrators with all the comments that define each opinion group and majority opinion. This would make the complexities of opinion and possible inconsistencies more visible and enable a deeper analysis.

Scoop received no complaints or enquiries related to transparency during the sugar and public health HiveMind.

5.6 Resource accessibility

Participants should have access to appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief.

Extensive information resources were provided to guide and inform participation. The HiveMind exercise was a forum for citizen-participants to learn about the issues from a range of perspectives and, potentially, to identify areas of common ground on what should be done to address the issues.

Initially the Polis window was positioned at the end of a lengthy article which presented a range of different perspectives. Page analytics showed that while significant numbers of people arrived at the HiveMind webpage, a large proportion of these people left the page before getting to the Polis window. In response, the page was reorganised so that the Polis window was positioned near the top of the page. A short summary of relevant information along with some instructions on how Polis works were also added.

Further experimentation and research is needed to understand how best to provide web-based information resources to support the public’s consideration of complex issues such as sugar and obesity. One approach might be to provide extensive information but to break this into short sections with related questions or comments. This would support immediate and active reflection and learning, which is more likely to keep participants engaged.

5.7 Task definition

The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined.

Early on some people reported being unsure about what they were supposed to do. Scoop responded by moving the Polis window to near the top of the webpage and adding more explicit instructions.

Some people reported problems with voting. Some people did not realise that a new comment was presented to them as soon as they had voted on a prior comment. Polis should consider a design change to make this clearer.

Participants could ask to be notified when new comments were added. Several complaints were received about receiving notifications after the sugar and public health HiveMind had closed. Polis should modify the Polis platform to stop notifications when an exploration is closed.

5.8 Structured decision making

The participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process.

Polis provides a mechanism for structuring and displaying public input. No complaints were received about the mechanism being inappropriate.

The Polis mechanism of data visualisation provides more insight to people's thinking opinions, beliefs and values than the comments sections typically used by media organisations.

5.9 Cost-effectiveness

The procedure should in some sense be cost-effective from the point of view of the sponsors.

While Polis is currently an open-source platform that can be used free of charge, there are costs associated with identifying and engaging stakeholders, recruiting participants, creating information resources, moderating comments, and analysing and reporting input.

In addition to the 256 people who actively took part in the HiveMind (see section 3), a large number of people visited the 'No sugar coating' webpage including a significant number who had not previously visited Scoop's website.

Scoop believes that the outcomes of the first HiveMind warrant developing a business model to support future initiatives of this kind.

5.10 Strengths of the Polis platform for the HiveMind process

Polis is well suited to Scoop's HiveMind initiative. HiveMind aims to provide an online space for diverse New Zealanders to explore public issues in a way that respects different opinions while providing insight about the nature of those differences and areas of common ground. Polis can do this because it:

- Combines qualitative and quantitative methods
- Allows both the organisers/researchers and participants to frame issues in their own words for other participants to consider. This joint framing allows theoretical and everyday knowledge to be brought together with the aim of providing solutions to difficult social problems
- Provides a structure that enables large numbers of people (200+) to cost effectively and productively engage with, and learn about an issue
- Is flexible and can be used identify and explore issues and the underlying value conflicts, as well as actions to address these
- Identifies, acknowledges and respects different perspectives by visually representing opinion groups. Polis able to identify and surface opinion clusters/groups even for positions that are shared by only a small proportion of the overall sample

- provides a 'safe' online space compared with other online tools such as the comment sections used by many media organisations. No issues with offensive behaviours such as trolling occurred during the HiveMind despite allowing anonymous participation
- allows participants to identify actions that might bridge different perspectives and be agreeable to most people
- has reporting functions that enable organisers and administrators to rapidly work with any findings.

5.11 Limitations of the Polis and the HiveMind process

While Polis is a good tool for the purposes of Scoop's HiveMind process, it does have limitations. This section records some of these.

Of the 256 people who cast a vote, almost 100 people (c.40%) were not 'counted' because they voted on fewer than 7 comments. Sixty participants cast only 1 vote. Research is needed to understand the reasons for this. It could be that some of these participants did not know what to do after voting once or that they did realise that they had voted (see section 5.7). Scoop and Polis should provide explicit instructions to participants about the need to vote at least 7 times so that their input counts.

Currently Polis only provides for anonymous participation and/or social media log-in via Facebook and Twitter. A log-in provides some protection from spamming and potentially enables demographic information to be collected and enable future contact with participants. However, Polis is currently configured so that all other participants can access an individual user's full profile if they log-in using a social media account. If Scoop decides to require log-in for future HiveMinds, it should:

1. Work with Polis to create a social media log-in option that provides administrators with information about the participant but maintains that participant's public anonymity, or
2. Set up its own account system to collect information about participants.

Polis draws attention through its data visualisation and summary reports to the most 'agreed' or 'disagreed' comments that either constitute the opinion groups or majority opinion. While this focus on 'top 5' comments simplifies the visualisations, it also means that even slightly less supported comments are not made visible and that they may not be given due consideration. Polis needs to consider ways to make clear that the data visualisation only shows a selection of comments and a way for administrators, and perhaps the public, to see a much more detailed view that shows all the comments that constitute opinion groups and majority opinion. This more detailed view should also make clear what criteria Polis uses to decide what is, and is not, included in opinion groups and majority opinion. Polis should also consider enabling administrators to change default thresholds such as the agreement threshold for majority comments. While this is currently set at 60%, the 'right' value is context dependent. A threshold of 75% would have been better for the sugar and public health HiveMind.

The final limitation is about using the results of a HiveMind process for policy and decision making. While a Polis-powered HiveMind process represent a considerable

step forward in terms of the news media's public participation, any findings should be tested further through more in-depth processes such as public deliberation.

5.12 Effectiveness of the process as a form of political inclusion

The sugar and public health HiveMind provided members of the public with an opportunity to be involved in defining and identifying issues and ways to address them.

As an independent media organisation, Scoop is well positioned to organise and host innovations like HiveMind and Polis. Scoop can help encourage people to participate in the important issues of the day by organising events like the HiveMind.

Research would be needed to assess what contribution, if any, the HiveMind made to mutual learning. What can be said is that the HiveMind provided a context to present comprehensive information about the issue and associated perspectives. It also gave participants an opportunity to actively consider other people's positions.

There is some indication that the HiveMind process generated nuanced and insightful 'public opinion'. For example, participants were not necessarily against a new sugar tax, but took into consideration what the consequences might be of such a tax on low-income people and families. They would be prepared to accept a new tax if these concerns were addressed through, for example, subsidies on healthy food and beverages.

Perhaps the most significant thing about the sugar and public health HiveMind was Scoop's willingness to experiment with new roles for the news media and the use of Polis as a mechanism to further political inclusion and to correct some of the democratic deficits that should concern everyone.

5.12 Recommendations for future HiveMinds

Scoop should consider:

- developing and implementing more systematic outreach strategies to recruit 200+ diverse participants, who vote enough times for their votes to count, by:
 - Requesting that stakeholder organisations encourage people in their communities to participate from the beginning of each initiative
 - Placing multiple HiveMind windows on a range of websites with diverse audiences
 - Designing a more active way of presenting information by providing small sections of information followed by an activity such as voting on statements relevant to the information
 - Providing clear and visible instructions for participants.
- engaging with stakeholder organisations to ensure that all major perspectives are covered
- collecting more information about participants to inform analysis. This could be by requiring a log-in. Any log-in system needs to be quick and easy to complete and provide for public anonymity
- developing and implementing a process evaluation to understand the effectiveness of recruitment and information provision strategies, any barriers to participation, and the user experience

- using a more effective system for stakeholder email communication
- providing explicit instructions to participants about voting at least 7 times so that their input counts
- partnering with researchers to investigate the impact of future HiveMinds on inclusion, democratic deficits and public problem solving.

Polis should consider:

- providing a social media log-in option that does not make personal profile information public
- modifying the Polis platform so that participants can track how their own comments are being responded to
- modifying the reporting system so the host organisation/administrators see all the comments of each opinion group and the majority opinion, and consider providing a more detailed public view
- enabling administrators to adjust key threshold variables in the Polis algorithms for local contexts
- modify the voting panel so that it is more obvious to participants that after they have voted a new comment appears
- modify notifications so they are not continued after an exploration is closed
- provide explicit instructions to participants about voting at least 7 times so that their input counts.

6. Conclusion: A different call for action

When it comes to public issues, those advocating for policy prescriptions frequently use the media and online platforms to promote their views and opinions. As a public arena, however, the media with its letters to the editor and comments sections provides the public with few opportunities to carefully consider complex issues. Even online sites, which encourage input from the public are usually limited to debate and argument. Neither the traditional media or the web 2.0 typically offer opportunities where people can, in a structured way, be exposed to a variety of perspectives and weigh what the possible costs and consequences of an action or actions might be. Neither are they encouraged to fully examine the nature of an issue, what lies behind differences of opinion or whether they can arrive at defining some common ground upon which to base public action. Scoop's HiveMind initiative is a step towards rectifying this as it provides an arena for mutual learning and the formation of a more insightful and informed public opinion.

Despite the limitations noted in this report, the findings of "No sugar coating" HiveMind suggest that a sizable majority of New Zealanders:

- **agree** that sugar problem is a complex issue and that a range of interventions will be needed to address it
- **agree** that the current voluntary measures are not sufficient to address the sugar issue
- **agree** that the government should develop and use a range of stronger interventions aimed at:
 - reducing the consumption of sugar, especially amongst young people
 - ensuring everyone can access affordable and healthy food and drink
 - encouraging and directing innovation to reduce sugar consumption

- **strongly support** measures such as:
 - the stricter regulation of the advertising and marketing of sugary drinks and junk food, especially to young people
 - better education and consumer information
 - measures that encourage and support more physical activity
 - using regulation to reduce the amount of sugar in food and drink products, to encourage behaviour change
 - regulation to direct and stimulate innovation.
- **support** the consideration of taxes and subsidies that work together to reduce sugar consumption and encourage the consumption of healthy food and drink while ensuring that healthy products are affordable.

Scoop believes that the public wants the government to take stronger action to address the sugar and public health issue and that there is a strong mandate for action.

Scoop also believes that new processes and arenas are needed to address many of today's complex problems and to improve conditions of trust and democratic legitimacy. Such processes need to promote inclusion, listening, learning and the formation of a more insightful and informed public opinion; something which is not usually sought or achieved by conventional forms of public engagement.

Scoop as an independent media organisation is well placed to host such processes and arenas with assistance from public engagement experts. The sugar and public HiveMind provides a promising model for how new online engagement technologies can be used to enable the public to help define and address important and complex issues.

Scoop would welcome approaches from organisations that are interested in further developing its HiveMind initiative.

Scoop calls on policy and decision makers to consider and respond to the findings of this report.

Appendix 1. Participant profile

The following table lists the demographic/identity statements that participants voted on and the associated 'voting' patterns.

ID#	Proportion who voted for comment	Comment	Overall
#000	66%	I identify as male	44% agree 37% disagree 17% passed
#001	74%	I identify as female	41% agree 42% disagree 16% passed
#002	67%	I identify as Pakeha/European	75% agree 10% disagree 14% passed
#003	73%	I identify as Pasifika	3% agree 73% disagree 23% passed
#004	69%	I identify as Māori	2% agree 77% disagree 19% passed
#005	73%	I identify as Asian	4% agree 76% disagree 19% passed
#006	73%	I live in a city	75% agree 11% disagree 13% passed
#007	73%	I am a parent	42% agree 34% disagree 22% passed
#008	68%	I am or have been overweight	38% agree 44% disagree 16% passed

Participants added the following 2 additional statements that describe the participants:

#055	50%	I actively avoid sugary food	53% agree 26% disagree 20% passed
#057	51%	I never buy fizzy drink	46% agree 31% disagree 21% passed

Appendix 2. Opinion groups

The following table lists the statements/comments that constituted the opinion groups and the associated voting patterns. The comments in grey shaded boxes are constitutive of the relevant group(s).

ID#	Comment	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Overall
#035	Resource programs which enable young people to grow and create their own food and understand the science behind how it all works.	85% agree 0% disagree 17% passed	94% agree 0% disagree 6% passed	56% agree 16% disagree 28% passed	89% agree 1% disagree 8% passed 63% voted
#058	Higher tax on high sugar foods, which can then be used to subsidise the ridiculous cost of healthy foods like fruit, vegetables and meat!!!	42% agree 20% disagree 38% passed	91% agree 1% disagree 7% passed	10% agree 80% disagree 10% passed	77% agree 14% disagree 8% passed 46% voted
#022	We should use food taxes and subsidies to encourage the consumption of health food and discourage the consumption of unhealthy foods	20% agree 42% disagree 38% passed	91% agree 1% disagree 7% passed	46% agree 16% disagree 38% passed	76% agree 8% disagree 15% passed 69% voted
#020	The NZ government needs to act much more boldly and with much more urgency.	22% agree 30% disagree 48% passed	92% agree 0% disagree 7% passed	48% agree 38% disagree 14% passed	79% agree 7% disagree 13% passed 68% voted
#009	The sugar and public health problem needs to be addressed fairly urgently.	75% agree 10% disagree 15% passed	96% agree 2% disagree 1% passed	35% agree 52% disagree 13% passed	82% agree 11% disagree 6% passed 73% voted
#041	It is difficult to say give people autonomy to decide with no regulation when society has to pay in the health care costs of obesity.	42% agree 20% disagree 38% passed	89% agree 1% disagree 10% passed	22% agree 72% disagree 6% passed	75% agree 12% disagree 11% passed 53% voted
#031	It is unfair to financially harm low income people, especially Māori, by using taxes to increase the price of food and drink	26% agree 26% disagree 48% passed	16% agree 52% disagree 32% passed	82% agree 0% disagree 17% passed	27% agree 43% disagree 28% passed 72% voted
#042	The govt MUST impose a sugar tax on all artificially sweetened & fizzy drinks reducing the social and economic cost of obesity illnesses.	35% agree 40% disagree 25% passed	75% agree 3% disagree 22% passed	16% agree 75% disagree 8% passed	64% agree 19% disagree 16% passed 58% voted
#000	I identify as male	47% agree 38% disagree 15% passed	50% agree 35% disagree 15% passed	6% agree 93% disagree 0% passed	44% agree 37% disagree 17% passed 66% voted

Appendix 3. Support for statement / comments

The following table shows the levels of support for all the statements/comments not listed in Appendices 1, 2 and 4 along with the proportion of participants who voted for each comment.

The shaded comments are the top 'majority' / 'consensus' comments' identified by the Polis survey tool. These are the statements/comments that were broadly agreed or disagreed by all participants regardless of group. Comments highlighted in green were agreed. Comments highlighted in red were disagreed.

By default, Polis identifies the top 5 comments that were agreed and the top 5 that were disagreed. The table does not list of 3 'disagree' statements that were about participant identity, not sugar and public health policy. See Appendix 1 for information about the participants.

Note that comments that have only been voted on by a small number of participants are not included in the shaded 'top 'majority' / 'consensus' comments' or the 'opinion groups' (Appendix 2) and have generally not been included in the analysis presented in this report.

ID#	Proportion who voted for comment	Comment	Overall
#036	65% voted	We should place tighter restrictions on advertising sugary drinks and junk foods, especially to kids.	97% agree 0% disagree 1% passed
#023	73% voted	We should impose restrictions on junk food marketing, particularly to children	94% agree 1% disagree 4% passed
#017	73% voted	We should ban or restrict the marketing of sugary drinks and food to children and teenagers.	90% agree 2% disagree 6% passed
#021	71% voted	Reducing the intake of sugar should be Government policy goal - especially for children and teenagers.	89% agree 5% disagree 5% passed
#025	68% voted	We should make sure that people can afford healthy food and drinks and families have enough time to prepare healthy meals.	88% agree 2% disagree 9% passed
#034	75% voted	Current initiatives aiming to encourage individuals to lead healthier lifestyles and the food and beverage industry to voluntarily provide healthier products and consumer information are sufficient - we do not need to regulate.	8% agree 80% disagree 10% passed
#037	65% voted	The "obesity epidemic" is unscientific nonsense. Discussions starting from "being fat is unhealthy" only encourage bias against fat people	12% agree 76% disagree 10% passed
#096	21% voted	Something is wrong when 'pop' is cheaper than water or milk.	94% agree 2% disagree 2% passed
#077	36% voted	Need to regulate the amount of sugar in baby/toddler foods so that children aren't habituated to mainly eating sweet foods from birth	89% agree 0% disagree 10% passed

#066	45% voted	Regulation, or the threat of it, should be used to drive and direct innovation in the food and beverage industry towards healthier products	88% agree 2% disagree 8% passed
#010	65% voted	The rapid rise of obesity is also about changes in the way we live as a society and in what we eat so we need to address a range of these matters	87% agree 3% disagree 8% passed
#016	71% voted	The significant increase in sugar in food and drinks is there to make food and drink more appealing and addictive hence increase sales revenue.	85% agree 2% disagree 12% passed
#070	41% voted	Media should play its part in challenging consumerist attitudes In our society.	86% agree 0% disagree 13% passed
#111	13% voted	Any legislation of sugar should be backed up by scientific evidence or studies of effects of similar legislation in other parts of the world	80% agree 4% disagree 14% passed
#018	67% voted	We need to invest in better information and education about the health impacts of sugar	83% agree 6% disagree 10% passed
#063	43% voted	Fresh, good quality NZ produce should be more affordable to buy in NZ than overseas.	82% agree 7% disagree 10% passed
#040	63% voted	Redesign our obesogenic environment to make walking and cycling easy and attractive. Improve footpaths & cyclepaths & lower traffic speeds.	82% agree 6% disagree 10% passed
#027	66% voted	Interventions must be developed in collaboration with communities so that they are effective and take their interests into account	80% agree 7% disagree 12% passed
#059	49% voted	Legislation to provide drinking water fountains at all schools from early childhood to high schools.	81% agree 6% disagree 12% passed
#019	71% voted	We should regulate the food and beverage industry to force them to lower the amount of sugar in food and drinks	79% agree 11% disagree 9% passed
#080	25% voted	The cost of diabetes will be \$1.8 billion by 2021. This should be taken into account when lack of harm to others is being considered.	80% agree 9% disagree 9% passed
#026	75% voted	interventions need to go beyond the regulation of sugar and address the drivers of inequality.	79% agree 9% disagree 11% passed
#029	65% voted	The Crown also has a duty to ensure Māori health protection measures are done in partnership with Māori.	78% agree 6% disagree 14% passed
#072	37% voted	If "enlightened self-interest" worked, manufacturers would already have acted for the long-term good of their customers.	78% agree 11% disagree 10% passed
#078	36% voted	We should provide a simple information system such as traffic light to indicate quantity and type of sugar	77% agree 8% disagree 13% passed
#105	17% voted	The government should adopt the 7 actions of the New Zealand Dentists Association 'Consensus statement on Sugary drinks' as outlined here: http://www.healthysmiles.org.nz/assets/pdf/Consensus%20Statement%20on%20Sugary%20Drinks.pdf	75% agree 0% disagree 25% passed
#024	71% voted	We should impose a ban on point of sale promotion of high sugar items in supermarkets	76% agree 8% disagree 14% passed

#044	48% voted	Sugar needs to be regulated and taxed.	76% agree 9% disagree 14% passed
#094	25% voted	Supermarket layouts strongly influence peoples' food purchases.	77% agree 10% disagree 12% passed
#103	22% voted	We tax tobacco to cover health costs, we should tax sugar to do the same.	77% agree 13% disagree 8% passed
#032	73% voted	Encourage Māori to set up māra kai (vegetable gardens) and teach gardening and cooking skills with a wider range of healthier methods	76% agree 5% disagree 17% passed
#065	44% voted	The Govt should work with the food & beverage industry to make NZ a global leader in solving obesity via new products & marketing approaches	76% agree 14% disagree 9% passed
#074	36% voted	Also need better education in schools on metabolic diseases such as type-2 diabetes and its links to obesity and lack of exercise.	75% agree 10% disagree 13% passed
#097	20% voted	Sugar labelled in teaspoons is a better method of labelling	72% agree 6% disagree 21% passed
#033	69% voted	Support Māori educational achievement which correlates with better diets and better health.	73% agree 7% disagree 18% passed
#054	51% voted	We need to educate children before they get bitten by the 'sugar bug'. They can influence their parents, similar to the Quitprogramme.	73% agree 13% disagree 13% passed
#090	23% voted	We need large scale marketing campaigns to change the way people think about and consume sugary products	72% agree 5% disagree 21% passed
#100	19% voted	My opinion on the food industry is, comparable to the cigarette companies using nicotine to attract people smoking as to sugar does for food	74% agree 3% disagree 22% passed
#095	18% voted	Take GST off healthy basic foods, that put 15% back into pockets immediately making good food more attractive,	72% agree 13% disagree 13% passed
#060	45% voted	Special much higher tax category for manufacturers and sellers of sugar drinks.	71% agree 9% disagree 19% passed
#086	33% voted	Medicalising obesity doesn't do justice to the complexity of the issues involved. A good sense of self-esteem and self-worth are important too.	68% agree 14% disagree 16% passed
#046	58% voted	I think that subsidizing Healthy fresh foods would help offset the negative effects of taxing sugary foods.	69% agree 19% disagree 11% passed
#043	60% voted	Other countries impose sugar tax - we MUST follow to stop childhood obesity in this country!	68% agree 12% disagree 19% passed
#067	41% voted	Regulation through central and local government is needed to stop the endless creation of food deserts in low socio-economic areas	68% agree 10% disagree 21% passed
#083	25% voted	The lack of focus by mainstream medical experts and the media on the importance of psychological health in obesity is disappointing.	68% agree 5% disagree 25% passed
#108	13% voted	Relying on education & individual choice when it comes to sugar will only worsen disparities in life & health outcomes	63% agree 0% disagree 36% passed

#113	9% voted	Not only should we subsidize fruit & veg but take steps to ensure a range of providers of local produce in every community	66% agree 0% disagree 33% passed
#062	43% voted	Money from sugar taxes could also be used to support local social clubs (rugby, running, sailing etc) to give people more options to be active	65% agree 15% disagree 18% passed
#101	20% voted	We need a 'sugar equivalent' indicator on labelling to account for effects of different types of sugar	60% agree 18% disagree 21% passed
#047	57% voted	Free public pools, exercise equipment in public places and programs aimed at fitness would make a huge difference. energy in = energy out	58% agree 23% disagree 17% passed
#082	30% voted	People frequently overeat to fill the emotional "black hole" in their psyche. It goes much deeper than self-control.	55% agree 14% disagree 30% passed
#091	24% voted	Supplement regulation with a stronger emphasis on food supply - quality and economy.	56% agree 12% disagree 30% passed
#049	58% voted	I would prioritise subsidising healthy foods over taxing unhealthy foods.	53% agree 27% disagree 18% passed
#055	53% voted	I actively avoid sugary food	53% agree 26% disagree 20% passed
#075	35% voted	Schools/communities should be taught NZ-specific genetic issues such as higher obesity/diabetes risk for descendants of Polynesian voyagers	52% agree 10% disagree 36% passed
#030	70% voted	If healthier foods were cheaper i would eat them more	50% agree 33% disagree 16% passed
#056	43% voted	sugar is rapidly converted to fat	50% agree 5% disagree 43% passed
#028	70% voted	The Treaty of Waitangi makes clear references to Māori health and places obligations on the Crown to protect Māori and their health.	48% agree 9% disagree 41% passed
#051	56% voted	People will feed themselves properly if they can afford to. Give people more money.	46% agree 35% disagree 17% passed
#057	51% voted	I never buy fizzy drink	46% agree 31% disagree 21% passed
#064	44% voted	Milk prices jumped up in 2001 when the Govt allowed Fonterra to form thereby reducing domestic competition. (Threaten to) Regulate the price	45% agree 8% disagree 46% passed
#073	39% voted	NZ should also provide tax/import-duty breaks for healthy sugar substitutes, eg stevia	42% agree 23% disagree 33% passed
#079	24% voted	In general, those that are hit hardest by progressive taxation will be those whose health will benefit the most.	46% agree 23% disagree 30% passed
#014	68% voted	People should be responsible for their making their own decisions about what and how much they eat and drink as long as accurate information and appropriate education is provided.	43% agree 34% disagree 22% passed
#092	20% voted	teach children self control and not to be greedy.	42% agree 21% disagree 36% passed

#088	23% voted	A Traffic light sugar warning system won't work as there are many types of sugars which are present in ratios. Manufacturers use this fact.	36% agree 21% disagree 42% passed
#015	70% voted	The government should not limit an individual's freedom to choose unless those choices are seriously harming others.	34% agree 46% disagree 19% passed
#039	68% voted	Sugar taxes don't harm manufacturers, they harm consumers. Give people money & time & less stress and they'll be healthier.	29% agree 48% disagree 22% passed
#098	22% voted	Corn syrup is worse because it is cheap but a slightly different chemical make up	30% agree 8% disagree 61% passed
#012	63% voted	Individuals should be free to decide whether and to what extent they consume products with high levels of sugar as long as they don't harm others.	26% agree 55% disagree 17% passed
#081	33% voted	It takes a well-adjusted non-needy person to eat well.	25% agree 46% disagree 27% passed
#089	25% voted	Most of the interventions won't work well as we use sugar for psychological & cultural reasons. Sugar is a comfort, a pick-me-up, a treat	27% agree 45% disagree 27% passed
#038	65% voted	Sugar taxes only make it harder for families who already can't make ends meet. Don't punish poor people.	19% agree 57% disagree 23% passed
#045	59% voted	Unwilling to add more complicated taxes, better to label harshly and educate, perhaps restrict sale to under 15 year olds	18% agree 53% disagree 27% passed
#099	21% voted	educate, don't regulate	11% agree 64% disagree 23% passed
#013	75% voted	We only need policies which a focus on preventing harm to others, not self-harm	8% agree 64% disagree 27% passed

Appendix 5. Statements/comments that were 'moderated out'

All participant comments were moderated by Scoop's moderators before either being posted for consideration by all participants or 'moderated out'. Moderators could either not post a statement or could remove a statement if they considered that the statement:

- broke any one of Scoop's [Terms](#) (e.g. is potentially offensive or defamatory; off-topic)
- was very similar to statements that had already been submitted as Polis works better when statements are distinctly different
- did not make sense.

The following 19 statements were either not posted for the consideration of other participants or were moderated out.

Taxing sugar is all well and good, and I agree as long as the alternative is made cheaper. Drop GST on fresh fruit and veges.
Anti Tabacco was successful through ads (educate), heavy taxes (punish), available cheap healthcare (support)
Sugar in food is addictive and used for comfort, also its an useful preservative our food, unlike Tabacco it is EVERYWHERE
Letting food manufacturers sell food laced with fat, salt and sugar, is like letting people build houses without toilets
Not addressing obesity, is a major missed opportunity.
Current initiatives aim to encourage individuals to lead healthier lifestyles and the food and beverage industry to voluntarily provide healthier products and consumer information.
Taxing Unhealthy foods is fair as it reflects there drain on the public health system.
Your comment 'Invest in better information and education about the health impacts of sugar' is too loose.
Honestly! Being fat seems to be on a par with the dangers of global warming. "Othering" isnt helpful!
When families are financially-poor, both parents work yet still struggle to pay bills, why should we expect these families to be time-rich?
People will feed themselves properly if the can afford to. Make good food cheaper.
If manufacturers can't address the price imbalance between unhealthy food and healthy food (e.g. Soda vs Milk), then taxation has to do it.
The media should stop linking obesity with sugar. Poverty and stress are much bigger drivers in the obesity problem.
I would like to see a tax on sugary drinks with >2% free sugars but NOT on artificially sweetened drink with less than 2% free sugars
Nothing is ever simple and approaching the issues from a single perspective i.e chose from one of the options(?)seems to be a weakness
There are many factors that citrine to our obesity epidemic. The solution needs to be social nor individual.
Fresh vegetables are a luxury for many new zealanders
Education alone isn't good enough as no one can everything. Regulation ensures that everyone is working to the same, up to date information.
I think all companies that add sugar to their product lines need to show this as "spoonfuls of sugar added" This way a customer can choose.

The statement ID# of these statements/comments were, in no particular order, 011, 048, 050, 052, 053, 061, 068, 069, 071, 076, 087, 093, 102, 104, 106, 107, 109, 110 and 112.