



the parents jury

Your voice on food and activity

www.parentsjury.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

Under embargo until Monday, 12 January 2008

Australian parents demand healthy menus and healthy venues

This summer, Australian parents are lobbying the hospitality industry for healthier children's food and drink options at restaurants, entertainment and sport venues as part of the 'Healthy Menus, Healthy Venues' campaign.

Launched today by children's health advocacy group The Parents Jury, the campaign will call for improved children's food options when eating out of the home.

A members' opinion poll reveals that 60 per cent of parents are dissatisfied with the food available to children when eating out. Nearly half of the respondents said they avoid venues that don't offer healthier options.

Parents rated cinemas as the worst offenders for providing unhealthy food and drink, with swimming pools and recreation centres ranked second worst. Parents cite a lack of fresh made-to-order items and an emphasis on cheap and unhealthy 'value meals' as the most irritating feature of entertainment and sport venue kiosks.

Parents Jury member and mother of two Jacqi Deighan says that as nearly one in four Australian children are either overweight or obese, restaurants and venues must take a more socially responsible approach to their menu planning.

"We need to move beyond the current culture that assumes that children won't eat anything other than chips, nuggets, ice creams and soft drink," Jacqi said.

The poll also revealed that when choosing a restaurant, parents prioritise healthy age-appropriate children's options over the presence of playground facilities or speedy service.

"There's no reason why a child shouldn't have a meal that's as tasty and nutritious as the regular menu items," Jacqi said.

In response to parents' concerns The Parents Jury will lobby the hospitality industry to provide basic nutrition training to student chefs and to establish industry-wide guidelines for healthy children's food and drink.

They will also be urging state governments to apply their existing school nutrition guidelines to entertainment and sport venues, which will limit the availability of high fat, sugar and salt products at these locations.

1/2

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact:

Caitlin Syrett, The Parents Jury Officer - Ph 0423 791 194 or 03 9667 1759

Justine Hodge, The Parents Jury Manager - Ph 03 9667 1742

The Parents Jury is supported by:





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The Parents Jury spokesperson Craig Sinclair questions why entertainment and recreation venues continue to sell unhealthy foods that are already restricted or banned in school canteens across the nation.

“The hospitality and catering industries should seize the opportunity to play a major role in promoting food as part of a healthy lifestyle to children,” Craig said.

Key poll results:

- 60% of parents are dissatisfied with the food available to children when eating out of the home.
- Cinemas are the worst offenders for providing unhealthy food to children, with swimming pools/recreation venues rated the second worst.
- Nearly 50% of parents avoid taking their families to certain venues because of the unhealthy children's food options
- Parents would prefer to see a healthy and age-appropriate menu for children that could include the option of cut price, smaller serves of regular menu items.
- Parents are extremely turned off by the lack of fresh, made-to-order items at entertainment and sport venues and the emphasis on cheap and unhealthy 'value meals'.
- Respondents showed overwhelming support (75%) for state and territory governments to introduce catering guidelines for entertainment and sport venues, much like existing school nutrition guidelines.

The Parents Jury suggests that restaurants and other menu planners try the following to create a profitable, healthy and appealing menu for children:

- Consult a nutritionist or nutrition organisation (<http://www.daa.asn.au> to find an accredited practicing dietician)
- Download their state or territory school nutrition guidelines as a starting point (www.parentsjury.org.au to search for 'school nutrition guidelines')
- Consult their state or territory school canteen association for advice and menu planning resources (www.parentsjury.org.au to search for 'school nutrition guidelines').

The Parents Jury is an online network of over 3,700 Australian parents who wish to voice their views and to collectively advocate for the improvement of children's food and physical activity environments.

The Parents Jury is supported by Cancer Council Australia, Diabetes Australia Vic, QLD & WA, the Australian and New Zealand Obesity Society (ANZOS) and VicHealth.

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