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HEALTHY KIDS

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MENU

TASKFORCE

Report of the Premier's Healthy Kids Menu Taskforce

#healthykidsmenus

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

2015

Foreword

South Australia is a great place to live and raise a family. As a Government, we are focussed on what makes our children healthy and happy, and how we can help them become strong, thriving adults.

South Australian families are dining out more often. At the same time, we know that childhood obesity is a growing problem for our State and Nation, with approximately one in four children overweight or obese. The health and psychosocial implications of this health concern is reason enough for us to act to make a change.

As Chair of the Healthy Kids Menu Executive Taskforce, I have led a conversation around encouraging restaurants, cafes, hotels, and clubs to offer healthier food choices for children. We have heard from various perspectives, recognising that the food industry have a number of interests which influence the content of their menus and are conscious of the need to have a menu that is appealing to customers whilst being cost effective and positive for their business.

The voices of families and children have been equally important, to learn about what drives purchasing behaviour, and what strategies are needed to support families in making healthy choices, and making these choices easy.

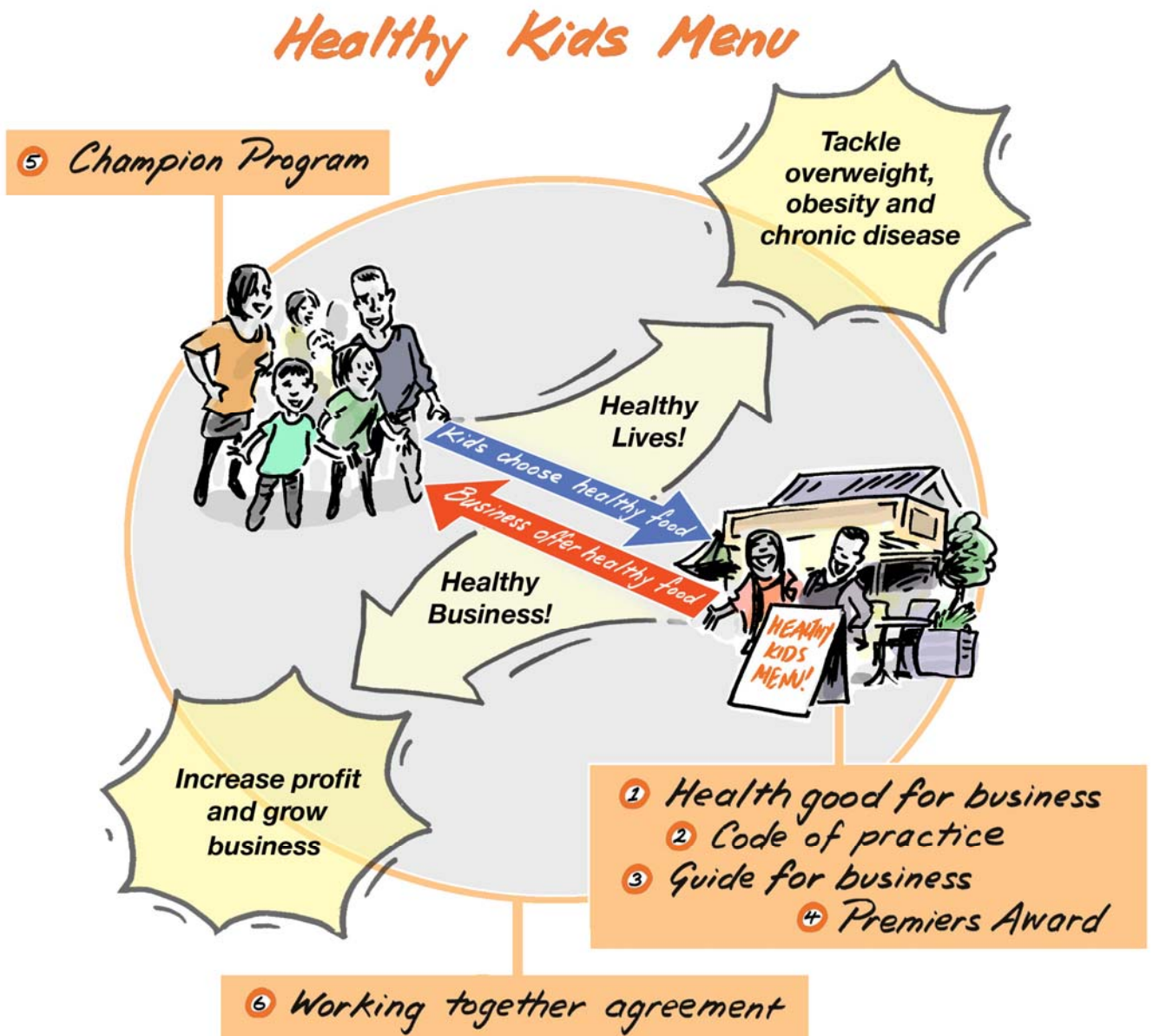
As a mother of two children, I know only too well about the challenges of choosing healthy options for my family when eating out; but truly believe that government, industry, and community, can work together to deliver effective solutions that support children and families to make healthy choices, and do so in a manner that maintains and strengthens business viability.

Childhood overweight and obesity is a complex issue requiring a whole of society and multipronged approach. This initiative is just one piece of the puzzle in addressing this important health issue. No doubt there will be challenges ahead, but through innovative solutions we have a fantastic opportunity to make a difference, and I look forward to continuing this work to support the health and wellbeing of South Australian children and families.

Leesa Vlahos MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health
on behalf of the Government of South Australia

What we are trying to achieve

The diagram below shows visually what our recommendations are and why they are important. This diagram also describes the connection between each recommendation, effectively a systemic approach to improve the quality and quantity of Healthy Kids Menus.



Our commitment to Healthy Food for Kids.

The Taskforce has a vision where more Healthy Kids Menus are available in food venues for purchase by families and children.

The Taskforce shares the Premier's aspirations to keep South Australians healthy and out of hospital.

We share the Premier's vision to have South Australia recognised Nationally and Internationally as a family and child-friendly State. We want to see happy, healthy children being raised in happy, healthy family and community environments.

Many conversations around the Taskforce table have reinforced the importance of kids' eating patterns as central to their health. We know that there are more and more overweight and obese children in our society. We also know that their diets are high in sugar, salt and saturated fat which their growing bodies do not require. We know our kids are deficient in critically important food groups such as dairy, fruit, and vegetables. We also know that kids learn from what they see their parents and caregivers doing – their eating behaviours, their food preferences and importantly the choices they make.

All of these observations point towards the importance of a broad ranging and far reaching effort to tackle overweight and obesity in this State. And obesity is the main game for us.



Kids Menus are a small but important focus area as they set a cultural norm of how we see and value what we feed our kids. If we see kids through the lens of ‘feed them quickly and keep them quiet’ we will have a vastly poorer outcome for both health and wellbeing. The Taskforce wants kids to be involved in choosing their food and experiencing the meal together as a family. We know that there are many more far reaching benefits to a family and a child if they enjoy a healthy meal together.

“... family meal time is where the tribe comes to transmit wisdom, embed expectations, confess, conspire, forgive, repair. The idealised version is as close to a regular worship service, with its litanies and lessons and blessings, as a family gets outside a sanctuary.”¹

The Taskforce believes that if we can get venues to adopt some small positive changes to their offering, we can begin to create a movement towards more nutritious, less energy dense foods being made available for kids and their families. And that this effort can have multiple positive outcomes for families and the communities they live within.

The Taskforce wants to begin a positive and engaging narrative around health in South Australia. For these recommendations to even begin gripping in society we need the public to be comfortable talking about health and inspired to improve their own health. Most recommendations contained in this report begin to introduce new thinking and fresh language – and we encourage the continued refinement and development of this by all people interested in the health of children and their families.

The Taskforce also wants people to have more choice, and make more choices. We know that people are more likely to support the systems they help to create – and Healthy Kids Menus are no different. We want the South Australian population choosing healthy and demanding healthy food. Only when this occurs will we begin to see the change we desire – more kids eating more healthy food.

Central to this work is connecting with children themselves. As the end consumer, we have to find ways that connect with kids as well as their adults.

¹ Nancy Gibbs, “The Magic of the Family Meal”, Time Magazine, June 4 2006, see www.time.com.

Supply, Demand & Collaboration: the keys to positive change

To support the adoption of Healthy Kids Menus in South Australia, the Taskforce agreed that supply and demand needs to be triggered at the same time. Not unlike the pistons of an engine, both supply and demand need to be supported and encouraged to ensure that healthy kids' meals are provided by venues and ordered by customers. They also can work together to expand the size of the healthy kids' menu industry – to get the groundswell happening and to mobilise the sector. The Taskforce wants to focus on both separately, and as a whole, helping to support the work underway to tackle obesity and ensure a healthy population into the future.

Central to encouraging supply (i.e. the provision of healthy food on menus in South Australia) is supporting the industry to get more healthy food on kids' menus in a practical sense (i.e. equipping cooks and chefs with the right skills and know-how) while also ensuring that there is a compelling business proposition in healthy food.

There is a trend towards healthy food in South Australia. Rising concern over levels of overweight, obesity, and general health has seen growth in the healthy food and drinks market, with many consumers looking to reduce their consumption of sugar and fat, and a growing focus on natural ingredients. As a global leader in the adoption of food trends, it is likely that these trends will continue to shape the way South Australians think about and consume their food. The second piston is about demand – as without demand, the industry will not supply healthier food for kids. There needs to be a significant investment in encouraging demand as this will nudge the uptake of healthy food. Key priority focus areas for increasing demand are to encourage people to order healthy food, encourage assertiveness when ordering, and to influence the psyche of the consumers themselves, kids.

Much work has already begun on triggering demand in South Australia, and the Nation. This includes:

- Investment in OPAL (Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle), a program coordinated through local government that supports children and families to eat well and be active
- The Right Bite Policy for South Australian Schools and Preschools, which promotes healthy eating by banning the sale of junk food and drinks in public school canteens and vending machines
- Rollout of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program, which delivers kitchen and garden classes enabling skills-based learning across the school curriculum
- The Front of Pack Labelling Health Star Rating, which provides clear nutrition information on the front of packaged food to assist consumers to make informed food purchases and healthier eating choices
- Labelling of kilojoule information for multiple-site food businesses (chain-food outlets), mandating the display of certain nutrition information at the point of sale to support consumers to make healthier choices when eating out.

There needs to be a concerted effort coupled with investment to continue to trigger demand in a highly critically commercial sector in this State. While we can work with children, label food better, and provide guidelines and toolkits, the greatest opportunity to breathe life into these recommendations is to energise and mobilise demand for Healthy Kids Menus. This endeavor will obviously have considerable flow on economic benefits for South Australia across multiple portfolios and can provide an injection into the economy of South Australia.

Partnerships

Underpinning supply and demand are high functioning partnerships that thrive across industry, Government, and service providers. This initiative cannot be Government led – it must be championed and blessed by industry to work, and to have longevity.

“I would prefer that, rather than this just being another Government good news story...” Business Owner²

The Taskforce has considered partnerships at length, and indeed this has been a central theme of our work for the last 6 months. We want to find ways for Healthy Kids Menus to improve and add value to businesses. We also want to equip businesses with the right skills and knowledge to implement Healthy Kids Menus well. We also want to support parents in choosing healthy food – and not make parenting harder. In order to focus on building supply and demand, we know that partnerships are key. As a mark of this shared philosophy, Commitment Statements are found at the back of this report.

The Taskforce has identified quite a few unmet needs which this work needs to address. These are:

- For business – some have told us that they need to know how to provide healthy food for kids and they also need to be confident that Healthy Kids Menus will sell
- For Government – we know that Government are not achieving the health outcomes our society needs, in fact our worrying health problems are increasing. We also know that Governments need solid commitments to partnerships from the non-Government sector to give them confidence to invest in initiatives – and that the most powerful change comes when there are strong, solid, public/private partnerships in place
- For families – they are frustrated at not having the ability to choose to purchase healthy food at hotels, cafes, restaurants and clubs. They also don’t have confidence to ask for food which is not on the menu, or for changes to a menu which would make it healthier.

These unmet needs have provided inspiration for the Taskforce to focus our efforts and energy in the areas where the greatest impact could be achieved. This Report acts as a catalyst for change, and attempts to begin a movement, which like the pistons of an engine can ramp up over time.

² Quote, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation Report, How can we encourage healthy menu choices for children, 2015.

Taskforce Principles

In exploring this topic, the Taskforce has adopted and wishes to promote the following principles:

Health is the focus

The Taskforce wants to shine the spotlight unashamedly on health for this work. We want health to be seen as a positive and popularised focus for society – people wanting and choosing to be healthy. In doing so, the Taskforce wants to limit the amount of nutrient poor, energy dense foods available on kids' menus while increasing the availability of nutritious foods.

Attractive for Industry

The Taskforce shares the vision that any activities or programs stemming from this work must be workable for and attractive to Industry – restaurants, clubs, hotels and cafes. South Australia's thriving food industry exists due to the innovation and creativity of the sector, and we want to ensure that these recommendations provide the food industry with options, and importantly, are easy to embrace.

Evidence Based Advice

Basing public policy on rigorous, established objective evidence is a key pre-determinant for this Taskforce. Whilst stories and anecdotes provide a strong narrative, the Taskforce wants to promote sound policy based on evidence. This has driven a large majority of the Taskforce's research and deliberations especially around health and healthy eating, as well as on industry challenges and market performance of Healthy Kids Menus.

More than the menu

The Taskforce knows that Healthy Kids Menus work best (and the meals from these menus are purchased by customers more often) when they are nested within a family friendly dining environment that promotes healthy food. In focusing on SA as being the best place to raise children and families, the Taskforce wishes to promote an increase in the number of venues that offer family friendly dining experiences.

Early adopters

Creating a movement is best achieved by generating interest, excitement and energy, and the Taskforce wants its work to trigger a movement. We want more people offering healthy menu options for kids. We know that there are innovators already offering Healthy Kids Menus across South Australia, and we believe that this work should support the innovators whilst focusing on early adopters – in order to trigger broader adoption across the industry.

Collaboration is key

As a micro-collaboration, the Taskforce has benefitted from having all stakeholders around the table. As our conversations have developed, we have recognised that collaboration has enabled us to take a deep dive into this space. We will only achieve population scale improvement in Healthy Kids Menus if we continue to invest in collaboration.

More than just dining out

The Taskforce is driven by helping people make healthy choices across their entire lives and not just when eating out. While our remit is squarely on dining out, the Taskforce has a broader aspiration to see a healthier society, with healthier families and healthier children.

What leads to population scale change

In organising our thinking for these recommendations, we have taken advice from multiple sources about the types of initiatives that help to achieve population scale health improvement. In the course of this work we have discovered that there are six categories which contribute to positive broad scale change. Any health programs (particularly those targeted at whole populations) must incorporate something across each element – in short this requires a suite of initiatives.

No single program, activity or endeavour will lead to the change required.

All our recommendations fall into one (or more) of these categories:

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| Fiscal Initiatives | We know that increasing the cost of undesired foods and decreasing the cost of desired foods is one of the ways to encourage better choices around food. We also know that in a dining environment, people’s choices are often highly influenced by the cost of an item or a dish. |
| Regulatory Initiatives | We know that regulatory initiatives are important as a catalyst for change, and to support other more voluntary activities. Sometimes Governments need to make a strong statement (through legislation, regulation or policy) that denotes a certain practice no longer being tolerated in a society. The intent of regulatory change is to either free up the ability for people to do the right things and/or make it more difficult for people to do the wrong or undesired things. |
| Social Marketing | Building a movement is perhaps the most powerful approach to population scale change in a health context. When people accept a change broadly as a social norm, the change is more likely to grip/endure into the long term. |
| Specific Targeting to certain groups | Targeting either the most interested or the most affected groups can lead to positive population scale change. We know that there are early adopters (venues who have either tried to offer healthy menus or who are interested in offering healthy food for kids). We also know that parents choose the venues and kids choose from the menu – so we recommend targeting early adopters, parents, and kids through a suite of approaches. |
| Workforce development | The frontline workforce for healthy menus are the cooks, chefs and business owners. By investing in building their skills and capacity to offer healthy food, we know that we can get lasting change. We also know that what we recommend has to leave them with enough scope to be creative. We know if they have the knowledge, skills and experience in creating and providing healthy food, they will be better equipped to do it well. |
| Build the evidence base | We know that to support population scale change in the health sector, our activities and direction needs to be informed by the best available science. We also know that we need to capture evidence about our progress to build a responsive and effective program to tackle obesity. |

Our Engagement

During our last 6 months of deliberations, we have embarked upon a program of evidence based learning. As a consequence this report reflects the considered evidence – and makes recommendations based on this.

During Taskforce meetings we have heard from Industry and Health professionals to help us understand the dilemma and the best suite of recommendations to address the issues of obesity in the context of what kids eat when dining out.

Parents

To ensure a constant connection to parents, the Taskforce invited three mothers from three diverse families to attend the Taskforce meetings and participate in deliberations. Their commitment was highly valued, providing many points of breakthrough for the Taskforce, especially as it grappled with complex initiatives. Many times the Taskforce was able to test and check ideas and initiatives with the parents while at the same time co-developing concepts between Industry, Government and the Health experts. Having the opportunity to involve and include parents' voices around the table has ensured that all of the recommendations of the Taskforce have considered the practical needs of parents, children, and the family unit.

Experiential Research

Complementing this specific expertise, we commissioned our own qualitative research which was conducted by The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI).

TACSI undertook research with families and business owners to answer the question, 'why don't children eat healthy food when dining out?' In short, this research uncovered the following:

- There is widespread dissatisfaction amongst parents with current children's menus because of a lack of healthy options
- Even the most health conscious parents put 'family friendliness' over health when choosing a venue to dine at
- 'Healthy' has very personal interpretations for parents – fresh food is the only uniting factor
- In most cases children choose from the menu, not parents. Currently those choices are usually less healthy than the food they would eat at home
- Innovative menu design for children can influence them to make healthier choices
- Children and children's menus are not a high priority in many venues where families are customers
- Most venues have tried healthy options and stopped, but they are open to trying again if there is a strong business case
- Small business is critical of any Government led initiatives
- Family friendliness will only succeed where staff and management attitudes to family friendliness are aligned.

The detailed findings from this research are included as a complimentary document to this report.

Public Opinion

The Taskforce was also keen to allow South Australians to provide their input and ideas into the mix, and as a result established a conversation on the Government of South Australia's *YourSay* website. Over 30 people contributed their issues and ideas online during a 3 week period, which the Taskforce was able to take into account to shape its recommendations. The themes which emerged included:

- Availability – there are limited healthy options when dining out. Healthier options on children's menus need to be made more available
- Dietary Foundations – people will never demand healthy if they don't know what healthy looks like
- Financial Incentives – In order to reduce uptake, we could make processed food more expensive
- Protocols – Consumers don't want to ask too many questions or feel like they are being 'annoying' to industry staff, so therefore refrain from demanding healthy options be included in their menu
- Busy lives – People dine out because they are too busy, and when considering cost and taste, 'junk' options are more appealing
- Sugar Intake – Should be targeting beverages and un-package meal deals (drinks and dessert)
- Portion Control – Large serving sizes make it easier to overconsume foods.

Some ideas which emerged from the YourSay forum included:

- By training/upskilling the hospitality industry we would educate people in how to offer and prepare healthy food
- Hands on involvement for children is always a great way to engage them in their food
- Advertising to children (promotes junk food) should be more controlled
- A Social Marketing Campaign could be used to help trigger demand for healthy food from children and their parents
- To help us identify healthy venues, a Health Star Rating and better Menu labelling might assist.

Taskforce Discussion on Sugar-sweetened Beverages

The Taskforce acknowledges the health impacts of sugar-sweetened beverages.

At Taskforce meetings, deliberations took into account the high volumes of sugar contained in soft drinks, juices, cordials and flavoured milks; the high consumption of these drinks by young people; and the association between sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, increased energy intake, and the resulting potential for weight gain and obesity.

The issue of a 'sugar tax' was raised in deliberations, including current examples being implemented across the world, and the reported early successes these are having in decreasing soft drink consumption.

The Taskforce agrees that considering the merit or otherwise, a tax was outside the remit of the Taskforce and instead is more suitable to be discussed at the National level in line with existing health advocacy efforts.

The Taskforce believes their recommendations address the issue of sugar-sweetened beverages through other mechanisms.

This includes recommendations that 'unpackage' beverages from meal deals (or include water in those deals), development of a voluntary Code of Practice that recognises water as the default beverage choice, and through ongoing consumer communications to grow the demand for healthy choices, including water.



Recommendations:

1: Development of a business case – “Make Health good for business”

The Taskforce recommends that Government and Industry collaborate to establish a strong business case for healthy kids’ menus to support implementation by Industry.

The Taskforce has a strong determination to make the case clear for all dining establishments in South Australia that ‘health is good for business’ and that healthy kids menus offer a viable business proposition for businesses.

The Taskforce has heard a very strong and compelling message from Industry bodies through this process about the economics of menu changes. Often these venues run a tight profit margin, and significant changes to a menu can potentially cause negative (and sometimes catastrophic) consequences for small businesses. The Taskforce wants to guard against unintended negative impacts on these businesses which are critical for the State.



The Taskforce wants businesses to be supported to try new approaches for healthy kids’ food, and not give up if at first they don’t succeed. By staying closely connected to the reasons that people buy (or don’t buy) a dish will assist the business to be responsive and adapt to what the market demands. We have learnt that ‘parents choose the venue and kids choose from the menu’, so often these improvements can be slight shifts in the offering or the marketing. The Taskforce encourages venues to seek ongoing feedback from their customers so they can tailor their kids’ menus to suit.

The Taskforce has noted that only some venues focus attention and effort on the development of robust healthy kids’ menus, and often those venues slip back into offering more unhealthy options at the first sign of drops in demand. Often the reason a product fails can be quite simple to overcome.

The Taskforce believes that Healthy Kids Menus are worth the effort for multiple reasons, some of which are:

- Return business – if families and kids enjoy their food and experience they are more likely to return
- Branding and promotion – under the umbrella of a reinvigorated food sector in South Australia, venues have the opportunity to carve out a market niche before the sector at large jumps in
- Quality food – for those venues focused on improving their offering, Healthy Kids Menus offer the ability to be known as consistent providers of quality food
- Next generation of customers – by investing in kids as the next generation customer, venues have the opportunity to build a long term sustainable business offering.

Ideas for implementation

The business case must include the following to enable it to resonate with the food sector:

- Why Healthy Kids Menus are important – and why we need business to support the effort (the call to action, tackling obesity)
- A compelling, economic based business case that gives businesses the confidence to introduce Healthy Kids Menus, or improve their offering. The case should be clear about why this will have positive (growth) opportunities for their business
- Case studies from South Australia, nationally and even globally that documents success and failure – and why this was so
- Ideas and information for how to sell healthy food to kids (and their adults) in their venue – and also how not to do it
- Ideas for growing their customer base and expanding into the family friendly dining market (should they choose to) – promotional and branding advice included
- Innovative financial incentives for encouraging industry adoption of Healthy Kids Menus.

This business case will be pitched at business owners/decision makers and should result in owners implementing Healthy Kids Menus with confidence and energy.

This business case must not look like (or be) a Government document and must be developed in close collaboration with industry – to get the pitch right.

This business case will be of enormous value to the Government of South Australia as it will be one of the documents that form the platform of embracing Healthy Kids Menus across the State.

2: 'Healthy Kids Menu' Code of Practice for South Australia

The Taskforce recommends that a voluntary Code of Practice be developed for industry adoption that positions South Australia as the benchmark State for supporting the healthiest menu options for kids.

The Taskforce believes that this Code of Practice will mark the standard for what constitutes a healthy menu. We have lofty aspirations to make all kids' menus as healthy as they can be, however we have learnt that in order to achieve that long term goal we need to take important steps that brings industry along. We have heard from industry about the cost pressures of offering varied and complex meals from menus that may never be ordered by customers. We have heard from parents about their reluctance to ask and make a scene in a dining environment. And we have heard from frustrated health professionals watching obesity and diet-related disease rates on the increase.

The Taskforce offers overwhelming support for this recommendation.

This concept has been well considered by Taskforce members and we believe the Code should include:

- The minimum standard for a healthy kids menu (i.e. less energy dense, more nutrition, more colour on the plate, water as the default beverage, un-packaging meal deals). This minimum standard would be informed by the Healthy Eating Principles which are yet to be developed
- The optimum standard for a healthy kids menu
- A compulsory requirement for all Government venues to comply with the minimum standard in one year, compliance with the optimal standard in 3 years. This would include State cultural institutions like the museum, zoo, library and State Government run events
- A brand developed around the Code that enables consumers to identify if their chosen venue is a signatory (i.e. Eat Local). The brand will be an enabler for industry to adopt Healthy Kids Menus and might help to provide them with more reasons for making the change (as opposed with more barriers for making the change)
- Supplementary promotional events, portals, apps that enable consumers looking for healthy menus to find their perfect venue (e.g. a Kids Eating Out website).



It is the intent of the Taskforce that the Code is underpinned by expertise and monitored by community driven feedback. The Code of Practice will be adopted widely (and work) if it is led by Industry with content based on evidence, advice, and support from Health Organisations (i.e. Heart Foundation, CSIRO and SAHMRI), and the Government of South Australia. The Code of Practice will be supported and enhanced by other recommendations in this report, including the Guide and the Business Case.

The Code is not intended to be certification driven, indeed this should be a self-regulating endeavour. Assessment is too expensive and the Taskforce believes that this may give the wrong message to industry. This Code should be voluntary for all venues (excluding Government venues, where it must be compulsory). Given the Taskforce aspires to see this adopted by Industry, consideration must be given for how to monitor implementation of the Code in a way that doesn't disengage interested and early adopters.

Ideas for Implementation

Some ideas that the Taskforce has considered include:

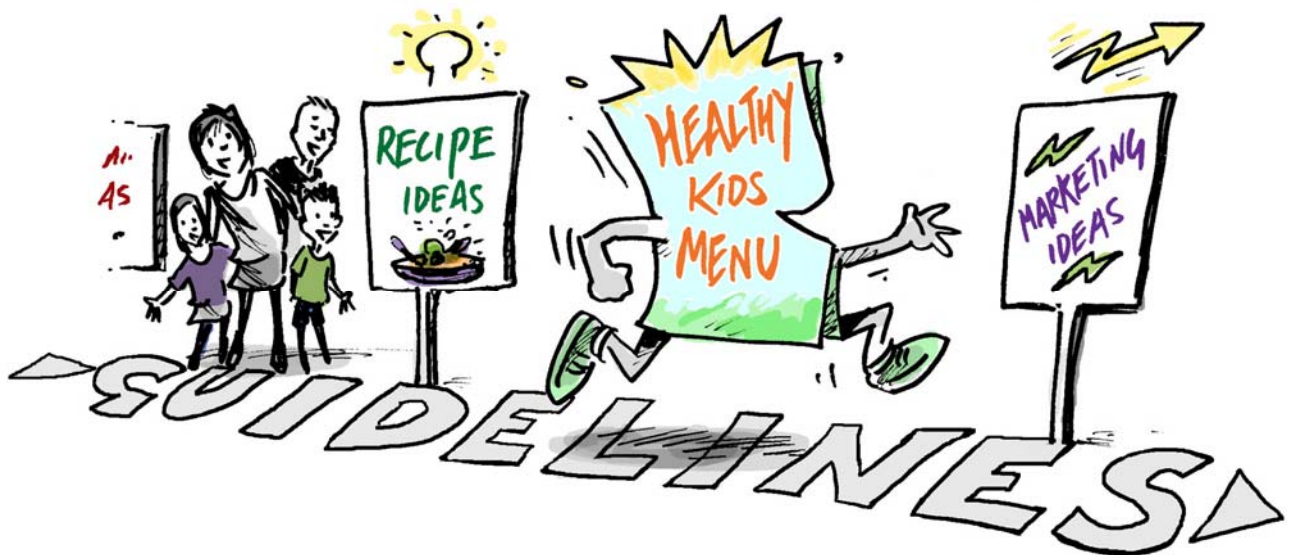
- Instead of a certification, the Code could be supported by a declaration approach (where businesses declare themselves to be compliant). This puts the onus on the owners of food venues and also relies on the market to determine if the Declaration is warranted. This honesty system fits well with the Taskforce's values of 'catching people doing things right!' A Healthy Kids Menu website could be a place where venues could declare their compliance by uploading their menus for broad scale public critique
- In the coming years, (if the Declaration approach is working well, or indeed if it is not working well) this could be tightened up to become more certified/regulated but would need to do so with the full support of the Industry
- The Code could be enhanced and be a deliverable for the Government of South Australia's Strategic Priority, "Every Chance for Every Child".

3: Healthy Kids Menu Guide for Business

The Taskforce recommends that a Guide for Business be developed to support the practical adoption of Healthy Kids Menus across food venues in South Australia.

This Guide should have practical and immediate use for all types of venues – restaurants, clubs, hotels and cafes and should be developed in collaboration with Industry, Health Organisations (i.e. Heart Foundation, CSIRO and SAHMRI), and the Government of South Australia.

This Guide will be a central source of information for how to make a Healthy Kids Menu work. It will be a supplementary document to the Code of Practice and the Business Case and will be pitched at the people who cook and serve food (cooks, chefs, and front of house staff).



The Guide should contain:

- Information about why Healthy Kids Menus are important
- Healthy Eating Principles – agreed and endorsed by Government, Health Professionals and Industry. These must address nutritional requirements for children
- Information about what a Healthy Menu looks like including ideas for how to overhaul your menu – from the health by stealth approach (i.e. swapping less healthy oils with healthier oils) to describing how to completely transform your menu
- Menu examples
- Where to go for more training/support.

Ideas for implementation

Recognising diversity in the catering landscape across South Australia, the need for specialisation has increased as our tastes and demography has shifted.

This guide needs to be developed by Industry in close collaboration with credible health providers to ensure its robustness from a marketable as well as an evidence based perspective.

This Guide will have practical and immediate application by cooks and chefs in a variety of venues (e.g. sporting clubs, restaurants, hotels, and cafes) as well as for business owners and decision makers in food businesses to assist in ordering and planning menu changes.

The Guide must be simple to use and must cleverly describe highly scientific/technical information in a clear, plain English way, using visual cues.

A note about workforce development

Workforce development is important and the Taskforce is interested in supporting interested chefs and cooks to learn more about Healthy Kids Menus. In that spirit the Taskforce offers the following ideas:

1. Workforce Development strategies for existing chefs and cooks.

The Taskforce has recognised that there is an opportunity to enhance the training for interested chefs and cooks in the industry that focusses on healthy, nutritious food for kids. We know that there is a lot of opportunity to support existing cooks and chefs in their normal working day through a raft of industry led, Government supported initiatives.

Experiential learning (“in service”) is undoubtedly the best way to develop skills as a chef or cook. The Taskforce believes that the Guide could also give rise to experiential learning/training opportunities that could be provided as a commercial venture. A focus on cooking healthy as being easy and fun is the key to a quick broad scale uptake.

2. Workforce Development strategies for the next of generation of chefs and cooks.

For the next generation of cooks and chefs the Taskforce would support the development of core competencies to support sector development in the area of Healthy Kids Menus.

The Taskforce believes that a natural progression of the Guide could be an addition (e.g. an elective) for existing training modules for chefs and cooks focused on nutrition and healthy eating for children. The Taskforce is aware that these training programs operate under a national jurisdiction, and therefore this would require broader engagement and endorsement.

4: Premier's Award for Healthy Kids Menu

The Taskforce recommends that the Premier sponsors a 'Healthy Kids Menu' award in the following award programs for 2016 and beyond:

- The Restaurant and Catering Awards for Excellence
- The Clubs SA Awards for Excellence
- The Australian Hotels Association (SA)'s Awards for Excellence.

The Taskforce knows that Industry take enormous pride out of success at their individual annual Award programs. Winners of such Awards set the standard for excellence in all categories, and most businesses report a boost to patronage as a result of success in such Award programs.



Ideas for implementation

The Taskforce would like to see an additional category added to the Awards (and sponsored by the Premier) to recognise and celebrate those venues which excel in the provision of Healthy Kids Menus (their health attributes and also their ability to tap into the growing market).

The Taskforce sees an opportunity for families and the public to nominate healthy kids menu venues that could be considered for the Award, which would assist in raising the profile of healthy food on kids' menus. Criteria will need to be developed to assess entrants against, and this could be a role of the working together collective which is explored in Recommendation 7 of this report.

5: Growing Demand

The Taskforce recommends that the Government of South Australia invests in the development of a large scale Communications Strategy which is aimed at growing demand for healthy options from children and their adults.

Having a positive public discourse around healthy kids' food is critical to the success of this venture, and a well-crafted Communications Strategy is an important 'piston for the engine'.

A central theme of the Taskforce's deliberations has been the need to focus on demand and supply. The Taskforce has understood the importance of generating demand for healthy food on kids' menus – this is about empowering families to ask for healthy menus and also ensuring they will purchase them when offered. Coupled with this is the notion of *supply* – which is about equipping venues with the right information, tools, and know how to create and provide a healthy menu. Supply measures are addressed through the Code of Practice, Business Case, and the Guide. Growing demand needs to be scaffolded by an encompassing communication's strategy.

The Taskforce provides advice that while health may be the purpose of the endeavour, it is unlikely that 'health' will sell to the general public. We need to find a way to sell 'healthy food' to children and their families. Inspirational and aspirational branding needs to be developed with a focus on finding the narrative that will inject a healthy dose of demand into the market.

The Taskforce believes there is nothing like this in Australia and very few in the world, and collectively agree that investment in this area will reap very positive outcomes across multiple unmet needs as described earlier in this Report. Indeed the Taskforce recognises there has been an incredible disinvestment in these types of initiatives in the past which has seen unhealthy food become the norm across the State. This strategy should be a collaborative effort between Health Professionals, Industry and the Government of South Australia.



Ideas for implementation

Online presence

The Taskforce has noted a gap in the online market which brings healthy food customers together with venues which can meet their needs, and sees an opportunity for a well-designed user-friendly website and app as a central communication's tool.

This website could also become an important community facing portal which has information about healthy choices, as well as the ability to search for venues which meet diners' needs. The Taskforce believes there is an opportunity to use this online presence to offer a central information portal to Industry (perhaps through an Industry only area) where they can access all the information they need to create a healthy menu or improve their existing offering (i.e. the Guide, Business Case and the Code of Practice).

The development of an app and the use of social media have specific appeal to the Taskforce.

Media

The Taskforce is aware that popular opinion is to a large extent driven and influenced by mainstream media. The role of media in supporting this Healthy Kids Menu work will be critical and should be considered carefully and invested in. The Taskforce encourages the Premier and key partners to engage media as closely as they would engage the public – in order to harness their support for the key messages contained, and to seek their assistance (through a call to action) to play their role in generating a movement for more kids eating more healthy food. The Taskforce suggests the Government seize opportunities to find proactive and interested journalists (potential parents themselves) to support the healthy kids menu movement.

Connecting with kids

It is also critical to engage with and find resonating messages and platforms for kids. One of the most fascinating insights through this process, especially from the research undertaken by TACSI is that children have a high degree of influence in the food they eat while dining out, with parents having responsibility for choosing the venue, but children are the ones that choose from the menu. A key to the success of any communications program will be to ensure there is a comprehensive child-friendly approach using platforms they connect with.

6: Healthy Kids Champion Program

The Taskforce recommends a Champion program be developed for implementation through the Clubs SA network. This program must be a shared program of Clubs SA and the Government of South Australia.

The Taskforce notes with interest the multiple examples of the spike in demand for foods endorsed by celebrities, particularly sporting heroes. We also note that these programs are most effective when targeted at children as decision makers for the food they eat. Sadly many of these programs are aimed at selling unhealthy food.

The Taskforce recognises that this program needs further development and resourcing to be done well, but looks forward to seeing this type of initiative rolled out with the support of Clubs SA, targeting a large majority of the population.

Ideas for implementation

Taskforce members have considered some detail about this proposal namely that key elements should include:

- Sporting oriented – potentially centred around sporting Associations such as the SANFL or Surf Life Saving with the nomination of a sporting champion as the face of each campaign
- Pitched at promoting healthy food choices to kids
- Identification of a well-known chef to ‘run’ and be the face of the campaign
- Travelling to key locations to promote the program and for the chef to run a mini masterclass with the club cooks – to better equip them in ways to offer healthy food
- Healthy food served to the club kids (and their adults) to give them a taste of healthy options
- Associated information and promotional packs.



7: Working Together Agreement & continuing momentum

Resourcing and investment will be crucial to seeing healthy kids' food offered and consumed in venues across South Australia. There needs to be a specific, targeted investment in leadership to support the implementation of recommendations, underpinned by a strong commitment.

In order to bring the Taskforce recommendations to life, the Taskforce recommends that the Government of South Australia, under the mandate of the Premier, develop and finalise a *Working Together Agreement* which involves key stakeholders from Industry and the Health Profession.

During the last 6 months the Healthy Kids Menu Taskforce has modelled collaborative governance around this polarising issue. Relationships and strong partnerships have been formed. Recommendations have been co-developed and the Taskforce believes that this needs a continuing collaborative rollout.

Therefore the Taskforce recommends that their role continue (as an overarching strategic governance group) for a 2 year period to oversee and assist with implementation of the recommendations. It is important to have the right people, in the right roles around the table and as such all members have indicated their willingness to continue in a governing capacity and to be signatories to the Working Together Agreement.



Commitment Statements

The Taskforce has considered its role and interest in this work and as such offer the following collaborative commitments to the partnership going forward.

Commitment Statement from Leesa Vlahos, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health, on behalf of the Government of South Australia:

We recognise the commitment from industry to work together to increase the supply of healthy food options, and the need from families to be supported to purchase and consume healthy options. Our intention is to provide ongoing targeted support to the Healthy Kids Menu Executive Taskforce and the revised governance structure that will help implement our recommendations. We recognise the role of Government in helping drive demand and endeavour to help build and create community awareness of this issue by taking responsibility for implementation of the communications strategy.

Commitment Statement from the Restaurant & Catering Association, Clubs SA, and the Australian Hotels Association (South Australian Branch):

We are committed to the recognition of the social and economic benefits of offering healthy options for children, and actively advocating this to our respective members. We are committed to continuing collaboration as a member of the Healthy Kids Menu Executive Taskforce and the promotion of, and support in, implementing the Taskforce's recommendations, including the *Healthy Kids Menu Code of Practice* and *Healthy Kids Menu Guide*.

Commitment Statements from the Heart Foundation, CSIRO, and SAHMRI:

We are committed to continuing collaboration as a member of the Healthy Kids Menu Executive Taskforce. We are committed to providing expert advice and in-kind support to the implementation of recommendations as deemed appropriate, such as development of the *Healthy Kids Menu Code of Practice* and *Healthy Kids Menu Guide*.

Commitment Statements from Flinders University and SAHMRI:

We are committed to continuing collaboration as a member of the Healthy Kids Menu Executive Taskforce. We are committed to providing expert advice on the monitoring of progress of the Taskforce's recommendations, and contributing to the evaluation of the impacts of the *Healthy Kids Menu Code of Practice* and *Healthy Kids Menu Guide*, and assessment of the appropriateness of strategies through process evaluation.

Appendix 1: Taskforce Members: our skills and expertise

The key purpose of the Healthy Kids Menu Executive Taskforce is to provide recommendations that identify possible solutions to increasing the availability of healthy kid's menus across the restaurant, café, hotel and club industries.

The Executive Taskforce Membership was selected based on key stakeholders determined most likely to be impacted by this initiative and to drive any outcomes.

Membership of the Taskforce is as follows:

- Chairperson: Ms. Leesa Vlahos, MP Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health; Member for Taylor
- Independent facilitator: Ms. Emily Jenke, CEO, democracyCo,
- Ms. Sally Neville, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Restaurant & Catering Association
- Ms. Wendy Bevan, Manager, Government Relations and Policy, Australian Hotels Association (South Australian Branch)
- Mr. Mike Penfold, Chief Executive Officer, Clubs SA
- Professor Manny Noakes, Research Director, Food and Nutrition Flagship, CSIRO
- Associate Professor Caroline Miller, Director, SAHMRI Population Health research group, Executive Officer, SAHMRI
- Ms. Tuesday Udell, Senior Policy Advisor, Heart Foundation SA
- Ms. Kristy Schirmer, Parent
- Ms. Jo Bolderoff, Parent
- Ms. Narelle Warner, Parent

Other supporting members whom have provided advice or project support to the Taskforce:

- Mr. Ian Horne, General Manager, Australian Hotels Association (South Australian Branch)
- Ms. Christine Carter, Sponsorship & Business Development Manager, Clubs SA
- Professor John Coveney, Dean of the School of Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Flinders University
- Dr. Kaye Mehta, Course Coordinator Bachelor of Nutrition & Dietetics, Flinders University
- Ms. Rachel McKay, Director of Health, Heart Foundation SA
- Mr. Adam Vonthethoff, Food and Beverage Manager, Adelaide Oval
- Dr. Svetlana Bogomolova, consumer behaviour and marketing researcher. University of South Australia
- Ms. Cassie Mason, Principal Policy Officer, Cabinet Office, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Ms. Carmel Williams, Manager, Strategic Partnerships, Public Health Services, Department for Health and Ageing
- Ms. Jacki Evans, Project Officer, Strategic Partnerships, Public Health Services, Department for Health and Ageing
- Mr. Chris Vanstone, Director of Co-design, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI)