



Media Release

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AUSTRALIAN FAMILIES ARE SPENDING \$13.6 BILLION EXTRA ON 'HEALTHY' EATING TRENDS

New research reveals food choices and eating behaviours across Australia are increasingly influenced by social media

A new study released today by Choosi has revealed Aussies are increasingly influenced by social media when it comes to food choices (39.0%), with Generation Y leading new eating trends (73.8%) and Australian families with children spending \$13.6 billion more each year to adopt healthier diets.

Examining the way Aussies make food and diet choices, the *Choosi Modern Food Trends Report* is the fifth instalment in a research series that aims to explore the key barriers and drivers behind financial and social behaviour in today's modern society.

Whilst Generation Y is spearheading new eating trends and is most likely to be influenced by social media when it comes to making food decisions (64.4%), Australians overall have become more health-conscious, with the vast majority (85.7%) saying they try to make healthy decisions about the food they eat.

But eating well comes at a cost, with Australian families spending \$4,515 more each year to follow a special diet or eat more healthy food.

Choosi spokesperson Katrina Foster said, "There is currently so much information about food; from nutritional data, to new cooking and eating movements, to the proliferation of 'foodie influencers' on social media. Australians now have access to more opinions about their diet than ever before."

"Aussies were traditionally influenced by their network of friends and family when it came to meal choices, whereas we now see the dominance of social media as a driving force in mainstream food trends."

Social media is not limited to Generation Ys either, with 36.8 per cent of Generation X and more than one in five Baby Boomers (21.2%) also influenced by social media when it comes to eating behaviours.

Half of all Aussies surveyed (50.0%) also feel inspired by other peoples' posts about food on social media, and close to a third (30.8%) post pictures of food they have made themselves or of their meals at restaurants (33.5%).

When it comes to learning about what they should or shouldn't eat, close to half (47.2%) of all Aussies source information from online articles and a further 22.2 per cent take eating advice from social media.

Whilst these findings identify an increase in online 'sharing' behaviour, actual face-to-face time with others over a meal is becoming a relic of the past. Less than half (47.1%) of Australians eat most of their meals around a table with their family or friends, with two in five (42.9%) saying most of their meals are consumed in front of the TV.

Close to a quarter (24.8%) of Australians eat most of their meals on their own at the table or kitchen bench, whilst one in seven (14.9%) say most of their meals are eaten at their office desk.

But some traditions endure with close to a third (31.3%) of Aussies still gathering for 'Sunday family dinners' and almost a quarter (24.2%) having 'takeaway dinner Fridays'.

The rise of social media and other influences are far reaching with the vast majority of Australians saying their eating habits have significantly changed over the past five (81.7%) and ten years (85.2%).

Nutritionist Dr Joanna McMillan said, "Given Australians are looking to new information sources to educate themselves about food and diet, it's positive to see many are still focused on making healthy eating decisions. That said, it's common for people to be confused with so many conflicting opinions out there."

Of the many reasons propelling the changing diets of Australians, almost half of all Aussies (46.1%) say they are increasingly likely to be influenced by the latest trends when making food choices.

Although Aussies say they try to make healthy decisions about the food they eat, there remains some uncertainty and scepticism around healthy eating. The large majority (72.5%) say there is too much of a focus on eating 'superfoods' and close to two-thirds (64.6%) agree that many modern food trends are not particularly healthy.

For some people, uncertainty and distrust has turned to outright disbelief with 74.2 per cent of Australians agreeing that modern food trends are becoming ridiculous and over 60 per cent believing that some 'superfood' claims are a myth.

"Even when taking into account the cynicism and uncertainty around certain food choices, it's undeniable that Australia is experiencing a significant shift in the way we research, evaluate and follow eating trends, particularly when it comes to health-conscious diets."

"The good news is that healthy eating does not need to involve expensive 'superfoods' and Aussies are recognising that some food trends are not based on evidence. It's encouraging to see that the majority of people are confident they are making healthier decisions overall", concludes Dr McMillan.

Additional findings from the *Choosi Modern Food Trends Report*

Change in eating habits

- The average Australian diet has changed significantly over the past decade (87.3%): the vast majority say their eating habits have changed over the past five years (81.7%) and over the past ten years (85.2%).
- More than a quarter (26.8%) of Australians say their eating habits are primarily self-taught, and close to two in five (39.0%) say social media influences their current eating behaviours.

Impact of Social Media & Food Trends

- The impacts of social media are far reaching: around half of all Aussies love seeing stylised food pictures online (48.8%) or prefer to consume food that looks great (53.7%).
- Those from Generation Y are the most likely to agree they love seeing stylised food pictures online (69.1%) and tend to prefer food that looks great (68.6%). They are also the most likely to feel pressured to follow dieting trends or eat healthy foods (36.6%).
- Close to two-thirds (64.8%) of Australians tend to purchase foods that are part of new food trends, and more than half (51.4%) claim to incorporate 'superfoods' into their diet.
- Many Australians agree that modern food trends are like fashion and are rarely here to stay (73.9%), and the vast majority of Australians agree that there are some good diets but most are just 'fads' (89.4%). Emerging and popular food trends identified in the study include 'zero waste' (55.3% have tried), 'health snack grazing' (49.3% have tried) and 'evening-focused food and drink' (31.2% have tried).
- Social and environmental concerns are also increasing in importance. Close to two in five (38.5%) Australians say social issues influence the food they choose and more than half (53.4%) are influenced by environmental issues. Also, raking high on the list of priorities are fair trade principles (56.8%) and animal rights issues (48.2%).

Cost and spending behaviours

- More than three in four (77.9%) Aussies say food has become more expensive over the past decade in Australia, and on average Australian families claim to spend over \$4,500 extra a year to follow a special diet or eat healthier. Rising food costs mean many Australians have been cooking more at home and ordering in less over the past ten years; on average, Australians spend approximately \$377 on buying groceries, \$89 on eating out and \$21 in ordering home delivery each month for themselves and/or members of their household.
- Aussies are happy eating at home, with seven out of ten (70.1%) saying they do not wish they could spend more on eating out or home delivery.
- Close to two in five (37.4%) Australians usually spend between 11 and 20 per cent of their total income on food, whilst close to a third (31.8%) claim to usually spend 21 to 30 per cent of their total income. One in five (19.9%) usually spend 10 per cent or less of their total income on food.

The full research report and supporting data is available at (link).

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About Choosi

Choosi provides information to help customers compare, choose and apply for a range of insurance products online and over the phone. Choosi's free comparison service lets you compare the benefits and prices of a range of popular insurance products, so you can confidently choose cover that suits your needs, your budget and lifestyle.

About the *Choosi Modern Food Trends Report*

In order to explore food and diet behaviours and attitudes in modern Australian society, CoreData surveyed 1,000 typical Australians across the nation in August 2017.

The sample collection employed soft quotas to monitor representativeness of the Australian population. Hard quotas by state were also engaged to ensure all the main states were represented with sufficiently robust samples (NSW = 200, VIC = 200, QLD = 200, WA = 200, Remaining states/territories = 200).