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The surveys were funded and commissioned by Queensland Health and DET. I-View Pty Ltd conducted the tuckshop convenor and Parents & Citizens survey. The principals survey was conducted by DET.

The survey instrument for tuckshop convenors was based on the NSW Canteen Managers Short Term Impact Questionnaire. NSW Health kindly granted permission to use these questions. Queensland Health conducted the analysis with assistance from Dr Heather Chipuer O'Neill and Ms Lucy Stanley.

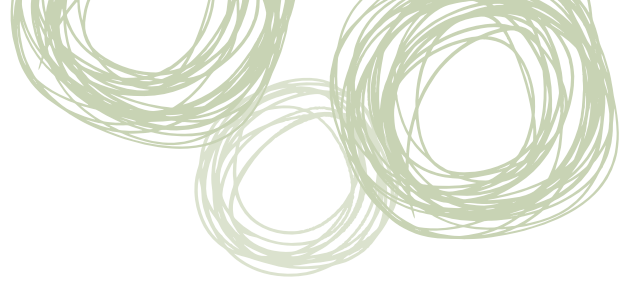
The *Smart Choices* strategy is based on the NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy.

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- Mr Ross Smith, Queensland Secondary Principals' Association

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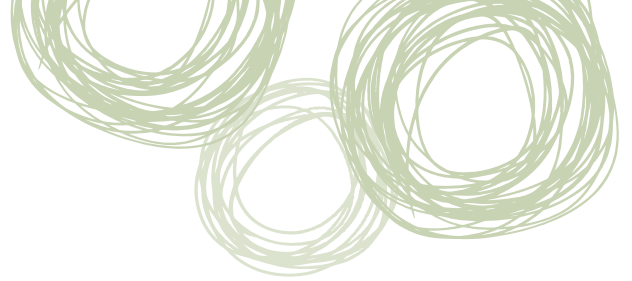
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## Foreword

All children and young people need good nutrition and adequate physical activity to grow to their full cognitive and physical potential, achieve a healthy weight, and be protected against chronic disease in later life.

Making Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people is one of the key ambitions of the State Government's 2020 vision, *Towards Q2: Tomorrows Queensland*. The *Smart Choices — Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools* ensures that all Queensland children and young people have access to food and drinks which comply with the National Health and Medical Research Council's Dietary Guidelines for children and adolescents while they are attending state schools. In this way, *Smart Choices* is an important strategy in achieving the State Government's target of cutting obesity by one third by 2020.

This evaluation of *Smart Choices* shows that the strategy has been understood, supported and implemented in Queensland state schools. We would like to acknowledge all the school communities that have worked so hard to protect the future health of our children by implementing the Smart Choices strategy.

The recent *Healthy Kids Queensland* survey showed that the prevalence of overweight and obesity among Queensland school-aged children is about the same as nationally in 1995 and is lower than in recent surveys in some other states.

This is very good news. It indicates that the Queensland Government's investment in promoting nutrition, physical activity and healthy weight is on the right track.

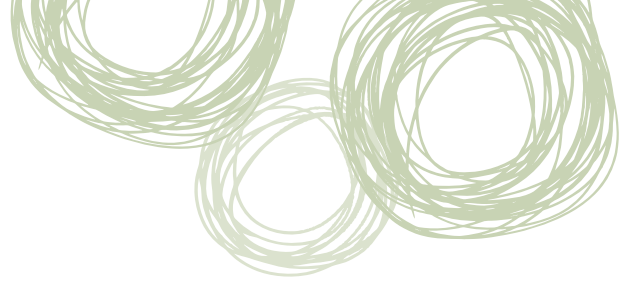
However, there is still much more to be achieved, as Queensland children are still consuming too little fruit, vegetables and milk and dairy products, and too many high energy, nutrient-poor food and drinks high in sugar, fat and salt. Many children are not physically active enough, and boys particularly spend too much time watching television and playing computer games.

The Queensland Government is committed to continued partnerships with non-government organisations, parents and carers, schools, industry and the whole community to help make healthy choices easier choices for all Queensland children and young people.

Geoff Wilson MP  
*Minister for Education and Training*

Paul Lucas MP  
*Deputy Premier and Minister for Health*





## Executive summary

The *Smart Choices – Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools (Smart Choices)* aims to ensure food and drink supply in Queensland state schools is consistent with the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*. It was released in July 2005 and became mandatory in all Queensland state schools in January 2007. *Smart Choices* is one initiative in a broad Queensland Government agenda to tackle the childhood obesity epidemic and improve children's health through better nutrition.

The implementation of *Smart Choices* was evaluated by surveying principals, Parents and Citizens' Associations (P&Cs) and tuckshop convenors. Organisations providing implementation support and assistance to schools were also surveyed. Results are reported across three domains: implementation, understanding and engagement.

The findings from this evaluation indicate that Queensland state schools:

- supported the rationale for introducing *Smart Choices*
- made significant efforts in a short period of time to implement *Smart Choices* across all areas of food and drink supply
- took steps to engage the school community in implementation of *Smart Choices*.

Nearly all principals (97 per cent), P&Cs (99 per cent) and tuckshop convenors (97 per cent) surveyed reported that school tuckshops had implemented *Smart Choices*. Almost all schools also reported implementation in breakfast programs, vending machines and in curriculum activities. Implementation was reported by the majority of schools in sporting events and sports clubs, fundraising, classroom rewards, class parties and as part of sponsorship and advertising within the school.

In tuckshops, the availability of GREEN food and drinks such as reduced fat dairy products, plain water, fruit, vegetables and wholegrain foods increased on most menus. Over half of the tuckshops surveyed reported that profits had increased or stayed the same.

Respondents from urban schools were significantly more likely than those from rural schools to rate themselves higher on a ten point scale of implementation of *Smart Choices*. Those from urban schools were more likely to attend training seminars, contact support agencies, report higher levels of understanding, report an increase in tuckshop profits, and respond more positively on a range of belief characteristics.

Respondents from secondary schools were significantly more likely than those from primary schools to attend a training seminar and contact support agencies. Secondary schools were more likely to report that tuckshop profits did not increase since implementing *Smart Choices* and were less satisfied with the range of products available for the menu.

As a result of undertaking this evaluation of *Smart Choices*, the following recommendations are made to ensure that the strategy continues to be an effective initiative to improve food and drink supply in schools:

- Provide ongoing support to maintain the implementation of *Smart Choices* in the tuckshop and vending machines and strengthen implementation of *Smart Choices* in school sporting events and clubs, fundraising events, classroom rewards and class parties (DET and Queensland Health).
- Implement a process to ensure the *Smart Choices* strategy keeps pace with changes in food supply and the food industry (Queensland Health).
- Maximise the benefits of existing funding and award programs by promoting the programs to schools and disseminating the experiences and knowledge of schools that participate (DET and Queensland Health).
- Develop an implementation plan to action the recommendations of this report (DET and Queensland Health).



## Introduction

In June 2005, the Queensland Government announced the implementation of *Smart Choices Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools* in all state schools. Implementation became mandatory in state schools on 1 January 2007.

The aim of *Smart Choices* is to ensure that food and drink supply in schools reflects the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* and the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*. School food and drink supply includes all situations where food is supplied in the school environment — tuckshops, vending machines, school excursions, school camps, fundraising, classroom rewards, sports days, breakfast programs, school events, class parties, sponsorship and advertising, and food used in curriculum activities.

*Smart Choices* is one of more than 100 initiatives of the Queensland Government to combat the current epidemic of obesity in children outlined in the *Eat well, be active – healthy kids for life: The Queensland Government's first action plan 2005–2008*. The Queensland Government announced further initiatives at the Queensland Obesity Summit in May 2006. Initiatives in the school setting, such as *Smart Choices*, complement actions across a range of government departments including Queensland Health, Sport and Recreation Queensland, Department of Communities and Queensland Transport. Children and young people, parents and carers, communities, non-government organisations and industry also have a significant role to play in fighting the current obesity epidemic in children.

All children need good nutrition to enhance immunity, grow to their full cognitive and physical potential, achieve a healthy weight, and be protected against chronic disease in later life. Poor nutrition and physical inactivity in childhood are associated with increased risk of chronic disease, including obesity and raised blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar. In 2006, 21% of Queensland children aged 5–17 years were overweight or obese, including 19.5% of boys and 22.7% of girls.<sup>1</sup> Initiatives such as *Smart Choices* and *Smart Moves*<sup>2</sup> are important steps to improving children's health.

During 2005 and 2006, two resource packages were developed and distributed to all state and non-state schools in Queensland to assist them to implement *Smart Choices — Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools* (distributed Term 3, 2005) and the Tool Kit (distributed Term 1, 2006). The *Smart Choices* strategy and the *Smart Choices* Tool Kit were based on the *NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy*.

In addition, a dedicated *Smart Choices* website was developed to disseminate information about the strategy and is accessible via the DET website at [www.education.qld.gov.au](http://www.education.qld.gov.au).

The strategy included a food and drink selector to assist schools with choosing food and drinks. The selector categorises food and drinks as GREEN, AMBER and RED. It consists of four components: a visual guide (the 'Spectrum'); details and examples of food and drinks in each category; nutrient criteria tables to identify RED food and drinks; and a ready reckoner of commonly supplied food and drinks.

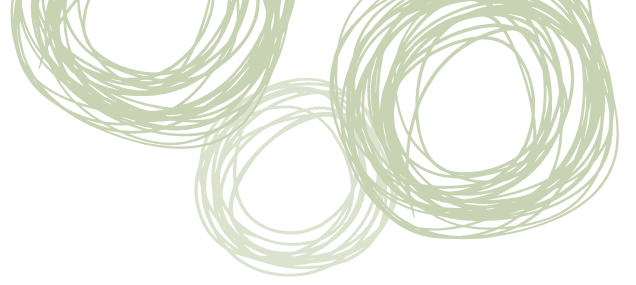
GREEN food and drinks are based on the five food groups and include bread, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles; vegetables; fruit; reduced fat milk, yoghurt and cheese; and lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts and legumes. Foods and drinks in this category are low in saturated fat, sugar and salt and rich in nutrients. These food and drinks should feature prominently in the school environment.

AMBER food and drinks have some nutritional value, but are higher in sugar, salt or saturated fat, or have had some sugar, salt or saturated fat added to them. These products should not dominate at the expense of healthier choices. Examples include processed meats, fruit juices, full fat dairy foods, some savoury pastries, plain ice creams, and small serves of uniced cakes and muffins.

RED food and drinks are based on the 'extra' foods as defined in the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*. These food and drinks should only be consumed occasionally because they lack adequate nutritional value, are high in saturated fat, added sugar or salt, can contribute excess energy, and can contribute to tooth decay and erosion. Examples include soft drinks, confectionery, deep fried foods, chocolate coated ice creams, and medium to large serves of most cakes and muffins.

1 Abbott RA, Macdonald D, Mackinnon L, Stubbs CO, Lee AJ, Harper C, Davies PSW. *Healthy Kids Queensland Survey 2006 – Summary Report*. Queensland Health: Brisbane, 2007.

2 Department of Education and Training. *Smart Moves – physical activity programs in Queensland Schools*. DET, Brisbane, 2007.



The requirements relating to the supply of RED food and drinks in schools are:

- RED food and drinks can be supplied on no more than two occasions per term across the whole school environment. Examples of school-related activities that could count as an occasion include school excursions, fundraising activities, school events focused on students, food and drinks prepared by students for sale or supply to students, school sporting events, school sporting clubs, and the school tuckshop.
- RED food and drinks cannot be pictured on, or supplied or sold in vending machines, provided by the school for class parties, classroom rewards, or breakfast programs, or included in sponsorship and advertising.
- RED food and drinks can be used in curriculum activities where it fits the context of the study, and supplied at school camps where the menu is consistent with dietary recommendations.

Implementation of *Smart Choices* means limiting the supply of RED food and drinks to no more than two occasions a term, encouraging and promoting GREEN food and drinks, and ensuring AMBER food and drinks do not dominate the choices.

Implementation in schools has been supported by the Queensland Association of School Tuckshops (QAST), Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations (QCPCA), Nutrition Australia, and Queensland Health and DET staff.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) funded QAST and QCPCA while Queensland Health (QH) also provided funding to QAST and Nutrition Australia to increase their capacity to support schools to implement the strategy.

A number of information and training sessions were offered to Parents and Citizens' Associations (P&Cs) and tuckshop convenors. QAST and QCPCA conducted workshops in each DET region in 2006. In addition, Queensland Health and DET staff conducted information and training seminars around Queensland, often in partnership with QAST, Nutrition Australia and other organisations, and supported school communities to implement *Smart Choices*. A TAFE course (six hours) was also developed for tuckshop convenors and offered in a number of locations commencing in Term 4, 2006.



## Evaluation methods

### Evaluation Reference Group

The *Smart Choices* Implementation Reference Group established an Evaluation Reference Group with representation from Queensland Health, DET, QAST, QCPCA and the Queensland Secondary Principals' Association. This group provided guidance and advice on all aspects of the evaluation including the evaluation plan, survey instruments, evaluation contractor, analysis of data, and evaluation report.

### The surveys

Three separate surveys were conducted in Queensland state schools during Term 2, 2007 (May–July).

#### Survey of school principals

DET sent all eligible school principals a request to complete an online survey by email. The email included a link to the online survey and a unique school passcode. The survey period was open for four weeks with a reminder email sent to non-responding principals midway through this period. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix 1.

#### Survey of P&C Associations in Queensland

A self-administered survey, sent by post, was considered to be the most effective method to survey P&Cs. P&Cs were sent a survey pack comprising a survey (Appendix 2), reply paid envelope, information brochure, a letter from the Queensland Health Chief Health Officer, and a letter from the QCPCA President. A reminder survey pack was posted four weeks later to all non-responding P&Cs. Return of a completed survey indicated consent. A separate letter was sent to school principals advising that a survey of P&Cs and tuckshop convenors was being conducted. The survey period was originally open for six weeks, but extended for another five weeks to maximise returns. An extra 123 surveys were returned between the original cut off date and the date of the final survey close.

#### Telephone survey of school tuckshop convenors

As tuckshop convenors are employed by the P&C in most schools, a letter from Queensland Health, an information brochure and optional participation form were sent to all P&Cs with a school tuckshop two weeks prior to the beginning of the survey period. P&Cs returning a non-participation form were excluded from the final sample. Tuckshops were included in the final

sample if the non-participation form was not returned before the survey period commenced. Tuckshop convenors were interviewed using a computer assisted telephone interview (CATI) and given the option to decline participation at first contact. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix 3.

The survey instruments were developed by Queensland Health and DET with assistance from the Evaluation Reference Group to measure process and impact indicators relevant to the strategy. The tuckshop convenor survey was based on the NSW Canteen Managers Short Term Impact Questionnaire (See the *NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy Evaluation Report 2005* at [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)). Permission to adapt this questionnaire was received from NSW Health. All surveys were piloted prior to implementation.

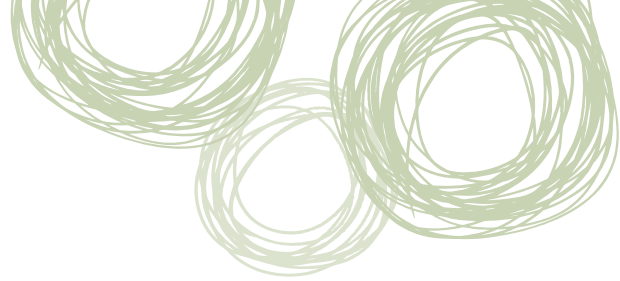
A fourth survey was developed by Queensland Health and circulated via email in October 2007 to all known organisations, groups and individuals who supported schools to implement *Smart Choices* (Appendix 4).

Approval to conduct this evaluation in Queensland state schools was received from DET through the formal ethics approval process. Queensland Health funded the collection of P&C and tuckshop convenor data. Data collection from principals was organised and funded by DET.

### Sampling

Principals from all Queensland state schools, all P&Cs, and all state schools with a tuckshop or canteen were eligible for inclusion. QCPCA provided the list of P&Cs. QAST provided the list of schools with a tuckshop from which the sample was derived. Special schools were excluded from the telephone survey of school tuckshop convenors as few have tuckshops. As implementation of *Smart Choices* is not mandatory in non-state schools, they were not included in the evaluation.

Invitations to complete a survey were sent to all principals (n=1275) and P&Cs (n=1258) eligible for inclusion (Table 1). The sample size of 500 tuckshops was randomly selected from 1055 eligible schools within primary/secondary and urban/rural groups. The objective of the sample allocation was to achieve a standard error on estimates for primary or secondary schools of less than 4.5% and less than 5% for urban or rural schools.



Tuckshop convenors were eligible for inclusion if they had been in a position within the tuckshop for at least 12 months. This resulted in 102 selected tuckshop convenors becoming ineligible for an interview. This is indicative of the high rate of turnover experienced among tuckshop convenors, with a significant number of new convenors being in schools since the introduction of the strategy. A further 48 schools were excluded because they indicated there was no tuckshop or that it had closed.

Surveys were completed by 991 principals, 607 P&Cs and 513 tuckshop convenors (Table 1). The data were screened for missing responses, and respondents who missed more than 25% of the survey items were removed from all further analyses.

Nine principals returned their surveys without completing any of the items and another nine principals missed more than 25% of the items. Removing these 18 respondents resulted in a final sample size of 973.

Nine P&C respondents missed more than 25% of the items on their survey and were removed from all further analysis, resulting in a final sample size of 598.

All tuckshop convenors completed the majority of the items on their survey and therefore none were removed from the analysis, keeping the original sample size of 513.

Information was obtained from respondents in rural and urban regions and in primary, secondary and special schools (Table 2). Around 50% of responses were from rural regions (ranging from 44% to 51%) and over 60% of responses (ranging from 62% to 75%) were from primary schools.

Invitations to complete the agency assistance and support survey were distributed via email to a list of known support agencies, organisations and individuals. These organisations were asked to forward the survey onto others who may have supported schools, so the total sample size and number of surveys distributed is not known. Respondents returned the survey via email or fax. A total of 76 surveys were returned (Table 3). One survey was excluded as more than 25% of the survey items were incomplete, resulting in a final sample size of 75.

Table 1. Sample design, selection and response

	Principals	P&Cs	Tuckshop convenors
Survey type	Online survey	Postal survey census	Random selection of 500 for telephone interview
Recruitment method	DET email to the principal's email address	Letter from Queensland Health to the P&C President inviting completion of a survey	Letter from Queensland Health to the P&C President informing of intention to interview the tuckshop convenor. An option to decline participation was included.
Eligible sample	All state school principals of primary and secondary schools, campuses, special schools and schools of distance education	All state school P&Cs	All state schools with a tuckshop
Number eligible	1275	1258	Random selection from 1055 schools
Number of responses	991	607	523
Number of refusals	NA	NA	10
Number of survey responses excluded	18	9	0
Number used in analysis	973	598	513
Overall response rate	78%	48%	98%

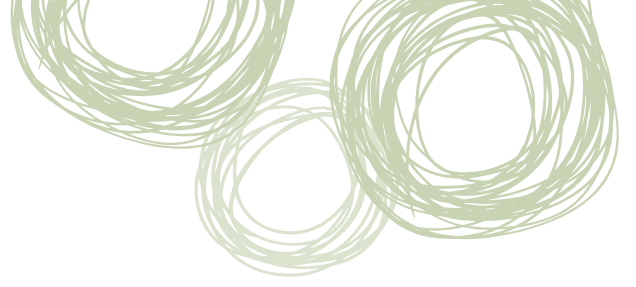


Table 2. Number of responses by principals, P&Cs, tuckshop convenors and schools by region and type of school and representation

	Principals		P&Cs		Tuckshops	
	Responding to survey – n (%)	Total in Qld (%)	Responding to survey – n (%)	Total in Qld (%)	Responding to survey –n (%)	Total in Qld (%)
	(n=973)		(n=598)		(n=513)	
Region						
Rural	494 (51)	52	275 (46)	52	243 (47)	48
Urban	479 (49)	48	323 (54)	48	270 (53)	52
School type						
Primary	728 (75)	75	433 (72)	75	341 (77)	76
Secondary	209 (21)	21	150 (25)	21	172 (23)	24
Special school	36 (4)	4	15 (3)	4	n/a	n/a
Rural						
Primary	389 (40)	41	208 (35)	41	157 (31)	36
Secondary	103 (11)	11	66 (11)	11	86 (17)	12
Special school	2 (0.2)	0.5	1 (0.2)	0.4	n/a	n/a
Urban						
Primary	339 (35)	34	225 (38)	35	184 (36)	40
Secondary	106 (11)	10	84 (14)	10	86 (17)	12
Special school	34 (4)	3.5	14 (2)		n/a	n/a

Table 3. Number of responses by agencies providing support or assistance to schools

Agency	Position	Number
DET	Community Participation Officer	12
	Other position within DET	2
Queensland Health	Community Nutritionist/Advanced Health Worker	8
	Public Health Nutritionist/Indigenous Nutrition Promotion Officer	6
	Community Dietitian	1
	School Based Youth Health Nurse	29
	Health Promotion Officer	6
	Oral Health Professional	8
Non-government organisation	Dietitian/Nutritionist	1
	Other	2
	Total	76



## Analysis

Results were analysed by school location and school type. Location was determined by coding schools as rural or urban based on standard DET classifications. School type was determined by coding schools as primary, secondary or special school based on data supplied by DET. Schools with year levels from Prep year (PY) to year 9 were coded as primary. Schools with Year levels 8 to 12 or PY to Years 10–12 were coded as secondary schools. Schools of distance education were eligible for inclusion in the principal and P&C surveys and were coded as rural and secondary.

ANOVA tests were used to identify difference between groups. A 'p' value of less than or equal to 0.05 was used to conclude a significant difference between groups such as region or school type.

## Reporting measures

Three measures are used for reporting the results: implementation, understanding and engagement. A description of each measure follows.

### Implementation

This measure relates to reported implementation across the school environment. It was assessed by asking principals, P&Cs and tuckshop convenors about the supply of GREEN, AMBER and RED food and drinks across the school within their areas of responsibility. Principals were also asked to rate their perception of the extent of implementation of *Smart Choices* in the school. P&Cs were asked about the effect of the strategy on tuckshop profits. Tuckshop convenors were asked about the use of, and type of, promotions for GREEN

food and drinks, strategies to ensure AMBER food and drinks do not dominate the choices, and any difficulties encountered when removing RED food and drinks from the tuckshop.

Some areas of school food supply, such as vending machines or sporting clubs, were not applicable to all schools. Therefore, implementation was assessed by examining only those areas applicable to each school.

### Understanding

This measure relates to activities undertaken by schools to increase their understanding of *Smart Choices*. It was assessed by asking whether the *Smart Choices* resources were accessed, information sessions attended, and any support organisations consulted during implementation. All groups were asked about their overall understanding of the strategy, and some were also asked about their understanding of specific aspects of the strategy.

### Engagement

This measure relates to the degree of engagement by the school community and activities undertaken to enhance engagement. It was assessed by asking principals and P&Cs if arrangements were in place to ensure that the supply or sale of RED food and drinks was limited to no more than two occasions per term. Questions also examined the methods used to communicate information to the school community, the main consultation process used to engage the school community, and the belief characteristics regarding student health, support by the school community, and the financial viability of healthy tuckshops and fundraising. Questions asked were relevant to each respondent's role in the school.



# Results

## Implementation

### Principals survey

Almost all principals reported implementing *Smart Choices* in breakfast programs (98%), curriculum activities (97%) and school tuckshops (97%), and that any RED food and drinks supplied for curriculum activities fit the context of the activity (96%). Most principals also reported that vending machines (94%), school excursions (94%), sponsorship and advertising (93%), foods prepared and sold or supplied by students (92%), school camps (91%), school events (87%), and student rewards (86%) meet the requirements of *Smart Choices* (Table 4).

Although still high, fewer principals reported implementing *Smart Choices* in school sporting clubs (73%), class parties (75%), fundraising activities (80%) and school sporting events (81%) (Table 4). However, 16% of principals were unsure about implementation

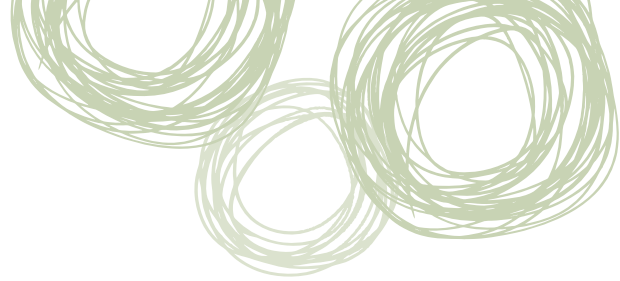
in sporting clubs and 13% were unsure about class parties.

Overall, very few significant differences in reported implementation were observed when compared by school location or school type. In the few areas where a significant difference in reported implementation was observed:

- Urban school principals were significantly more likely than rural school principals to report implementation at sporting events (86% compared to 77%).
- Principals from primary schools were significantly more likely than those from secondary schools to report implementation in curriculum activities (98% compared to 95%) and school excursions (95% compared to 91%).
- School principals from primary and secondary schools were significantly more likely than those from special schools to report implementation in classroom rewards (87% compared to 57%) and school excursions (94% compared to 79%).

Table 4. Proportion of principals reporting implementation of *Smart Choices* across different areas of the school environment

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Unsure (%)	Total (n)	n/a (n)
Breakfast programs	98	1	2	366	603
Curriculum activities	97	1	2	953	17
School tuckshop	97	2	1	853	117
Curriculum activities where RED foods fit context	96	1	4	823	145
Vending machine stock	94	6	0	50	922
School excursions	94	2	4	887	84
Sponsorship and advertising	93	2	6	426	546
Prepared and sold or supplied by students	92	3	5	763	210
School camps	91	0	9	910	54
School events	87	10	3	927	42
Student rewards	86	8	6	937	31
Vending machine advertising	85	10	4	48	921
School sporting events	81	13	6	896	73
Fundraising events or activities	80	13	7	905	63
Class parties	75	13	13	873	95
School sporting clubs	73	11	16	356	615



### Self-reported implementation

Most principals (83%) self-rated their schools as achieving eight or more on a ten point scale of implementation. Only 8% of principals rated implementation as less than seven out of ten. Principals from urban schools were significantly more likely than principals from rural schools to rate implementation as eight or above out of ten (87% compared to 79%).

### Parents and Citizens' Association survey

Nearly all P&Cs reported implementing *Smart Choices* in the school tuckshop (99%) and most in breakfast programs (92%) (Table 5).

Although high, fewer P&Cs reported implementing *Smart Choices* in school P&C events (88%), fundraising (84%), sponsorship and advertising (84%), vending machines (83%), sports events (80%) and school sporting clubs (77%). P&Cs were least sure about implementation in sponsorship and advertising (12%) and sporting clubs (16%) (Table 5).

There were very few significant differences in reported implementation of *Smart Choices* across all areas of P&C operations by school type or location. A few significant differences in reported implementation was observed:

- Primary school P&Cs were significantly more likely than secondary schools to report implementation in fundraising events (87% compared to 79%).

- Secondary school P&Cs were significantly more likely than primary school P&Cs to report implementation in vending machine stock (92% compared to 64%) and advertising (95% compared to 60%), although 94% of schools reported not having vending machines.
- Primary and secondary school P&Cs were significantly more likely than special school P&Cs to report implementation at school events (89% compared to 54%).

### Changes to tuckshop profits

Over half the P&Cs (56%) reported an increase or no change in tuckshop profits since implementing *Smart Choices* (15% reported an increase and 41% reported no change). Around one-third (32%) reported a decrease in profits. A further 13% were unsure whether there had been any changes in profits since implementing *Smart Choices*.

P&Cs from urban schools were significantly more likely than those from rural schools to report an increase in tuckshop profits (19% and 10%). Secondary school P&Cs were significantly more likely than primary schools to report that tuckshop profits had decreased (47% and 26%). There was no significant difference in reporting an increase in tuckshops profits between secondary and primary schools (17% and 11%).

Table 5. Proportion of P&Cs reporting implementation of *Smart Choices* in P&C operations across different areas of the school

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Unsure (%)	Total (n)	n/a (n)
School tuckshop	99	0.9	0.4	541	54
Breakfast programs	92	3	5	237	356
School/P&C events	88	7	5	570	22
Sponsorship and advertising	84	4	12	281	311
Vending machine advertising	84	13	3	31	564
Fundraising events	84	8	8	559	33
Vending machine stock	83	11	6	36	562
School sporting events	80	7	5	549	45
School/P&C sporting clubs	77	7	16	312	281



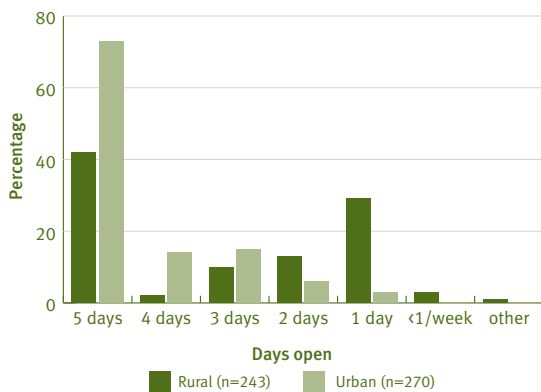
## Tuckshop convenor survey

### Tuckshop operations

Most tuckshops (93%) are operated by P&Cs, while schools operate only 5% of tuckshops. Just over half the tuckshops (54%) are open five days a week (Monday to Friday).

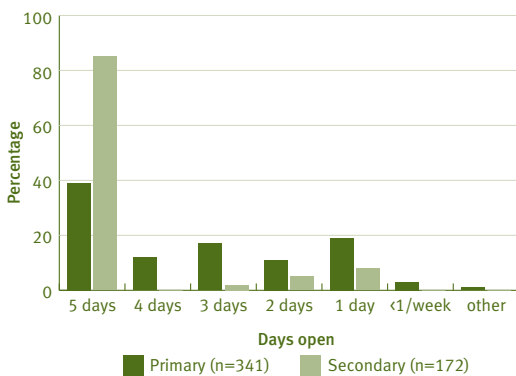
Significantly more urban school tuckshops were open five days a week (Monday to Friday) compared to rural tuckshops (66% and 42% respectively) (Figure 1). Of the rural school tuckshops not opening five days a week, most open one day a week. In contrast, most urban school tuckshops not opening five days a week open three or four days a week.

Figure 1. Percentage of days tuckshops are open in rural and urban schools



Over one-third (39%) of tuckshops in primary schools are open five days a week, compared to 85% of tuckshops in secondary schools (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of days tuckshops are open in primary and secondary schools



### The RED category

Nearly all tuckshop convenors (97%) reported that all RED food and drinks had been removed from the tuckshop.

Many (79%) reported no difficulties removing RED food and drinks from the tuckshops, while 21% experienced some difficulties. There were no significant differences in reporting difficulties removing RED foods when tuckshops were compared by school type or location.

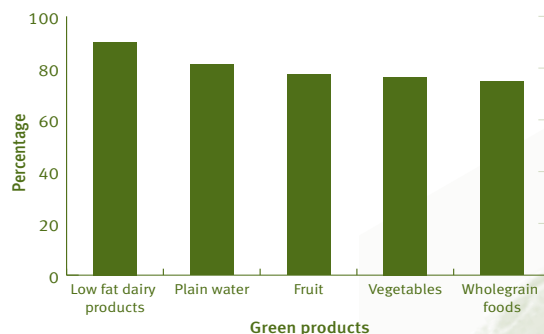
Of those reporting difficulties (n=105), concern over loss of profits (n=67; 64% of 105 tuckshops) and lack of demand for healthy foods by students (n=63; 60% of 105 tuckshops) were the two most common types of difficulties stated. Other difficulties reported were lack of support from the school community (n=48; 46% of 105 tuckshops), difficulty accessing suitable GREEN and AMBER products (n=40; 38% of 105 tuckshops), and problems with managing the change to a *Smart Choices* tuckshop (n=35; 33% of 105 tuckshops).

### The GREEN category

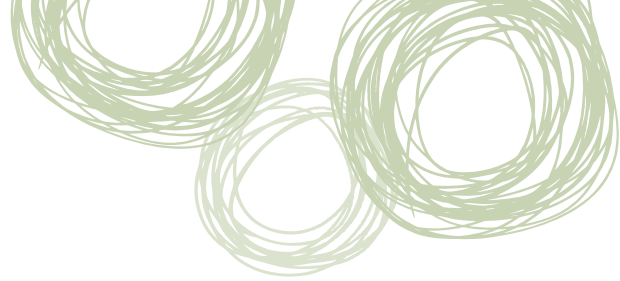
Most tuckshop convenors (91%) reported that the availability of GREEN food and drinks had increased on the tuckshop menu.

Most tuckshop convenors reported that low or reduced fat dairy products were more available (90%), and about 75% reported wholegrain foods, fruit and vegetables were more available (Figure 3). Many had also increased the availability of plain water (82%).

Figure 3. Proportion of tuckshop convenors reporting an increase in the availability of GREEN products on the menu



Tuckshop convenors from urban schools were significantly more likely than those from rural schools to report increased availability of fruit (86% compared to 69%), reduced fat dairy products (93% compared to 87%), wholegrain products (83% compared to 66%), and plain water (89% compared to 74%) on their



menus. Regarding school type, tuckshop convenors from primary schools were significantly more likely than those from secondary schools to report increased availability of fruit on their menus (83% and 67%). Significant differences between primary and secondary school tuckshops were not reported for vegetables, reduced fat dairy products, wholegrains and plain water.

Over half the tuckshop convenors (59%) indicated that promotion of GREEN food and drinks had been conducted in the tuckshops in the 12 months prior to the survey. Notices in school newsletters (93%) and media such as signage, posters and displays (83%) were the most common methods used for promotion. Least common was the use of special theme days or weeks (37%) and competitions (30%). Other forms of promotion included assembly announcements (62%), daily or weekly specials (55%), taste testings (52%), meal deals (51%) and information for classrooms (48%).

At least three quarters of tuckshop convenors agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the range of GREEN and AMBER products accessible (78%), that the tuckshop has reliable regular access to healthier products through distributors and suppliers (78%), and that a greater range of healthier products has become available through suppliers and distributors in the last 12 months (75%).

Tuckshop convenors from urban schools were significantly more likely than those from rural schools to agree or strongly agree that they had reliable access to healthier products through suppliers and distributors (86% compared to 69%). Convenors from primary schools were significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree than those from secondary schools that they were satisfied with the range of GREEN and AMBER products accessible (82% compared to 70%).

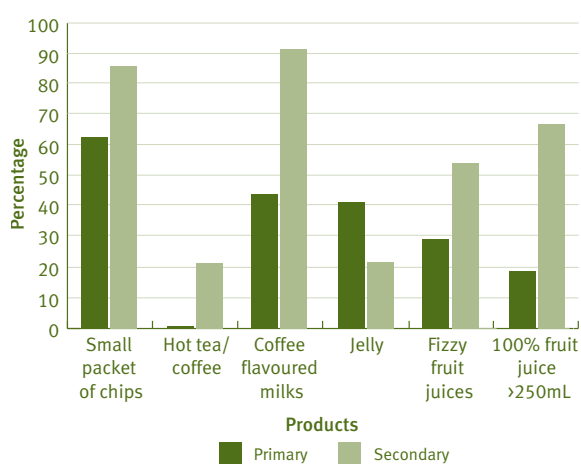
### The AMBER category

By far the most common strategy to ensure AMBER products do not dominate the menu choices was by offering smaller serving sizes wherever possible (90%). About two-thirds of tuckshop convenors limited the number of packs or servings of AMBER products sold to students (66%), or limited the availability of some AMBER products to only certain times of the day (64%). Around half the tuckshop convenors (47%) offered a particular AMBER product on fewer days per week.

Many tuckshop convenors (84%) indicated they used two or more strategies to ensure AMBER food and drinks do not dominate the tuckshop menu choices.

Tuckshop convenors were asked to report on the availability of a range of products on the menu (Figure 4). More secondary schools than primary schools sold small packets of chips, hot tea and coffee, coffee flavoured milks, fizzy fruit juices and fruit juice in sizes greater than 250 ml. Almost two-thirds of primary schools sold small packets of chips and nearly half sold coffee flavoured milks and jelly.

Figure 4. Availability of a range of products in primary and secondary school tuckshops



### Buying guides or product lists

Most tuckshop convenors (87%) reported using a buying guide or product list. The FOCIS Registered Product List was the most popular guide used (82%), followed by food company product lists (73%), supplier/distributor lists (63%), QAST Trades and Services directory (57%), and the NSW Healthy Kids Buyers Guide (50%).

## Understanding

### Principals survey

#### Accessing resources

Nearly all principals accessed the *Smart Choices* strategy resource (97%) and most accessed the Tool Kit (86%). A high proportion of principals also accessed the *Smart Choices* website (70%).

#### Contacting support

Many principals (78%) indicated their school contacted at least one supporting organisation, while 22% did not contact any supporting organisations. The most frequently contacted support was QAST (53%), followed



by QCPCA (48%), DET Community Participation Officer (38%), and the *Smart Choices* District Contact (35%). Other supporting organisations contacted included Queensland Health staff (30%), Nutrition Australia (18%), and DET central office (15%).

Secondary school principals were significantly more likely than primary school principals to contact each of the supporting organisations listed above, except the DET central office, where there was no difference. Principals from urban schools were significantly more likely than those from rural schools to contact each supporting organisation, except for a Community Participation Officer or Queensland Health staff, where there was no difference.

### Understanding

Many principals (79%) rated their understanding of *Smart Choices* as good or excellent, and only 2% rated their understanding as fair, poor or unsure. The remainder (19%) thought their understanding was average.

There were significant differences in reported understanding of *Smart Choices* across both school type and location. Principals from secondary schools were significantly more likely than those from primary schools (85% compared to 77%), and principals from urban schools were significantly more likely than those from rural schools (83% compared to 75%), to report their understanding of *Smart Choices* as either good or excellent.

### Parents and Citizens' Association survey

#### Accessing resources

The *Smart Choices* strategy resource was accessed by 89% of P&Cs, the Tool Kit by 83%, and the website by 70%. Only 5% of P&Cs did not access the strategy, Tool Kit or website.

#### Information sessions

Over half the P&Cs (53%) reported attending at least one information session on *Smart Choices*, and one in five (19%) attended two different sessions. Almost half (47%) reported that they did not attend any information sessions.

Urban P&Cs were significantly more likely than rural P&Cs to attend a *Smart Choices* regional seminar (45% compared to 31%), or other information session (42% compared to 30%). Secondary school P&Cs were significantly more likely than primary school

P&Cs to report attendance at both types of seminars. Most special school P&Cs attended the *Smart Choices* regional seminar but were significantly less likely than other school P&Cs to attend other information sessions available (7% compared to 37%).

### Contacting support

Most P&Cs (91%) reported seeking support to implement *Smart Choices*, and 50% made contact with at least three supporting people or organisations. The most frequently contacted support was the principal (86%), followed by QAST (42%), QCPCA (32%), and Nutrition Australia (31%). Other supporting organisations contacted included the *Smart Choices* District Contact (28%), Queensland Health staff (27%), Community Participation Officer (27%), and DET central office (10%).

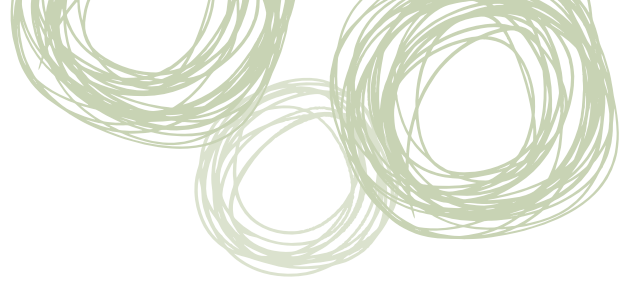
Urban school P&Cs were significantly more likely than rural schools to contact QCPCA (40% and 22%), QAST (55% and 26%), Nutrition Australia (40% and 20%), a *Smart Choices* District Contact (32% and 24%), and the DET central office (14% and 5%). When compared by school type, secondary school P&Cs were significantly more likely than primary school P&Cs to contact QCPCA (40% and 29%), QAST (54% and 39%), a *Smart Choices* District Contact (38% and 26%), an Education Queensland Community Participation Officer (41% and 22%) and Queensland Health staff (43% and 22%).

### Understanding and confidence

P&Cs were asked a number of questions about their understanding of key aspects of *Smart Choices* and confidence about implementation (Table 6). Agreement was high for all measures of confidence and understanding.

Table 6. Percentage of P&Cs that responded 'yes' to four questions about understanding and confidence

Understanding/confidence	% responding 'yes'
Feel confident that the P&C can determine what situations would be counted as a RED occasion	95
Understand what types of food and drinks fit into the GREEN, AMBER and RED categories	95
Understand how <i>Smart Choices</i> applies to all areas of the school environment	94
Feel confident that the P&C meets the requirements of <i>Smart Choices</i>	93



Few significant differences were observed in responses to any of these questions when compared by school type or location:

- Rural school P&Cs were significantly more likely than urban school P&Cs to report they understood how *Smart Choices* applies to all areas of the school environment (96% compared to 93%).
- Special school P&Cs were significantly less likely than other school P&Cs to report feeling confident that the P&C meets the requirements of *Smart Choices* (73% compared to 94%).

Most P&Cs (86%) rated their understanding of *Smart Choices* as good or excellent, and 3% rated their understanding as fair, poor or unsure. Around 10% thought their understanding was average. Special school P&Cs were significantly less likely than other school P&Cs to report their understanding as good or excellent (67% compared to 86%).

Many P&Cs (80%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the resources, information sessions and support contacts available to them. There was no difference in level of satisfaction based on school type or location.

### Tuckshop convenor survey

#### Accessing resources

Nearly all tuckshop convenors (96%) accessed the *Smart Choices* strategy resource and 84% accessed the *Smart Choices* Tool Kit. Both resources were accessed by 82% of tuckshop convenors. Three per cent did not access either resource.

More than one-third (37%) reported that they accessed the resources at least once a term, and 30% at least once a month. A small percentage (5%) had not referred to the resources in the past 12 months.

#### Information sessions

Almost half the tuckshop convenors or their volunteers attended a *Smart Choices* regional seminar (46%) or an information session (44%). One-third (32%) attended a tuckshop convenor network. Very few attended a TAFE course (9%). About one-third (29%) attended no information sessions.

Urban tuckshop convenors were significantly more likely than rural convenors to attend a seminar (53% and 38%), attend an information session (52% and 35%), or a convenor network meeting (43% and 20%). This

pattern was consistent for school type, with secondary school convenors significantly more likely than primary school convenors to report attending all opportunities for training and networking.

### Understanding and confidence

Most tuckshop convenors (89%) indicated that their overall understanding of *Smart Choices* was 'good' or 'excellent'.

Understanding and confidence were further examined by asking tuckshop convenors about key aspects of *Smart Choices* and implementation in the tuckshop (Table 7). Nearly all tuckshop convenors reported feeling confident about implementing *Smart Choices* (99%), and understanding of the GREEN and AMBER (98%) and RED (96%) categories. There were no significant differences in responses to these statements by school location and type.

Table 7. Percentage of tuckshop convenors who agreed or strongly agreed about three statements of understanding and confidence related to *Smart Choices*

Understanding/confidence	% agree or strongly agree
Confident that the tuckshop meets the requirements of <i>Smart Choices</i>	99
Understand which food and drinks fit into the AMBER or GREEN categories	98
Can determine which food and drinks fit into the RED category	96

## Engagement

### Principals survey

#### Arrangements to limit the supply of RED food and drinks

Nearly all principals (97%) indicated that arrangements were in place to limit the supply or sale of RED food and drinks to no more than two occasions per term. Only 2% indicated that arrangements were not in place, and a further 1% were unsure.

Although levels of reporting were high in all groups, principals from urban schools were more likely than principals from rural schools to report arrangements were in place (99% compared to 95%), and primary and secondary school principals were more likely than special school principals to report having arrangements in place (97% compared to 91%).



## Communication

The most common methods of communicating information about *Smart Choices* were through discussion at meetings (97%), in school newsletters (94%), by announcements at assemblies (87%), and displaying information at the tuckshop (74%). School websites were used less than other methods to communicate information about *Smart Choices* (17%). Many schools (75%) used at least four different ways to communicate information about the strategy. Only 1% reported they did not use any methods of communication with the school community.

## Consultation

A total of 58% of principals indicated they used an existing committee as the main process to consult with the school community about plans to implement *Smart Choices*. Informal meetings were used by 20%, forming a new committee by 11%, other processes by 10% and 1% of principals indicated that no consultation with the school community occurred.

## Personal beliefs and school engagement

Principals were asked questions about a number of personal beliefs and school factors that could assist with or provide a measure of school engagement (Table 8). Most principals agreed that *Smart Choices* was an important strategy to improve children's health and the school puts student's health and wellbeing before profits. Around two-thirds agreed that the school received a lot of support from the school community and that this support increased in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Table 8. Percentage of principals who agreed or strongly agreed with four statements about *Smart Choices*

Statement of belief	% agree or strongly agree
<i>Smart Choices</i> is an important strategy to improve children's health	91
Our school always puts student health and wellbeing before profits from food and drink sales	90
Support for <i>Smart Choices</i> among the school community has increased over the past 12 months	67
Our school received a lot of support from the school community to implement <i>Smart Choices</i>	64

Principals from urban schools were significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree with each of these statements than principals from rural schools. No significant differences in responses were observed when compared by school type.

## Parents and Citizens' Association survey

### Arrangements to limit the supply of RED food and drinks

Most P&Cs (93%) indicated that arrangements were in place to ensure that the supply or sale of RED food and drinks was limited to no more than two occasions a term. 3% indicated that the P&C did not have arrangements in place. No differences were observed in P&Cs that reported arrangements were in place when compared by school type or location, except for special school P&Cs that were significantly less likely than other schools to report having arrangements in place (60% compared to 94%).

## Communication

Nearly all P&Cs (97%) discussed *Smart Choices* at meetings, 94% informed volunteers, and 92% included updates about the strategy in school newsletters. Few P&Cs (20%) used the school website or internet to communicate about the *Smart Choices* strategy.

Most P&Cs (87%) used four or more methods to communicate information about *Smart Choices*. Less than 1% did not use any form of communication about the strategy.

## Consultation

Over half (59%) indicated that the main process for consultation with the school community was through an existing committee. Almost one in five (18%) consulted through informal meetings, 15% formed a new committee and 3% reported using no consultation process to engage the school community.

## Personal beliefs and school engagement

P&Cs were asked questions about a number of personal beliefs and school factors that could assist with, or provide a measure of, school engagement (Table 9).

Agreement was highest for statements related to student's health and lowest when considering support from the school community to implement *Smart Choices* and the financial viability of healthy fundraising.

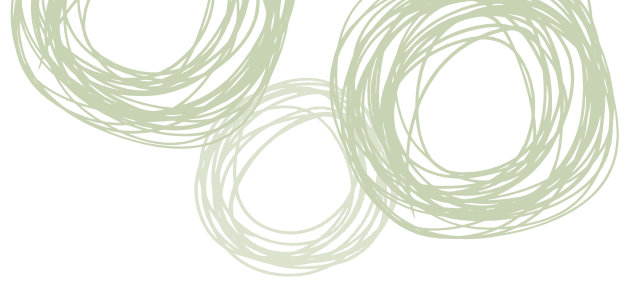


Table 9. Percentage of P&Cs that agreed or strongly agreed with a number of statements about Smart Choices relevant to engagement

Statement of belief	% agree or strongly agree
Our school always puts student health and wellbeing before profits from food and drink sales	91
Smart Choices is an important strategy to improve children's health	86
A healthy school tuckshop can be financially viable	78
Support for Smart Choices among the school community has increased over the past 12 months	62
Healthy fundraising alternatives can be financially viable	61
The P&C received a lot of support from the whole school community to implement Smart Choices	58

There were no consistent differences in P&C responses to these questions by school type or location.

### Tuckshop convenor survey

#### Personal beliefs and school engagement

Tuckshop convenors were asked questions about personal beliefs and school factors that could assist with, or provide a measure of, school engagement (Table 10). Two-thirds believed that a healthy school tuckshop can be financially viable, and just over half agreed that they had received a lot of support from the school community to implement Smart Choices.

Table 10. Percentage of tuckshop convenors who agreed or strongly agreed with statements about Smart Choices relevant to engagement

Statement of belief	% agree or strongly agree
A healthy school tuckshop is financially viable	66
We have received a lot of support from our school community to implement Smart Choices in the tuckshop	57

There were no consistent significant differences among tuckshop convenors by school type or location.

## Results of the agency assistance and support survey

### Type of assistance and support provided

Over 60% of respondents presented or discussed Smart Choices at meetings (66%), provided written information such as newsletters or fact sheets (66%), and provided advice in person or over the phone (77%).

Around 50% of respondents (48%) reviewed the tuckshop menu and at least a third (35%) participated as a member of a school committee or organised a Smart Choices workshop or forum (40%).

### School community members

Almost half of respondents (47%) provided support to at least four groups within the school community including principals, teachers, tuckshop convenors, P&C committees and parents. A further 35% reported supporting two to four groups, and 6% provided support to one group.

Additionally, 45% indicated that they provided support to other agencies or staff supporting schools.

### Aspects of Smart Choices

Over 70% reported that they provided general information about Smart Choices and healthy tuckshop food and drink ideas.

Less than 25% reported providing assistance on menu ideas for sport events, special school events, vending machine options, breakfast programs, school camps and school excursions.

### Accessing Smart Choices resources

The Smart Choices strategy resource was accessed by 88% of agencies, the Tool Kit by 79% and the website by 80%.



## Discussion

### Implementation

This evaluation of the implementation of *Smart Choices* shows that all members of the school community contributed to implementing *Smart Choices* across a broad range of areas in the school environment, introducing changes to help improve children's health.

There were high levels of implementation of the strategy in tuckshops, with nearly all principals (97%), P&Cs (99%) and tuckshop convenors (97%) reporting that school tuckshops had implemented *Smart Choices*. In addition, nearly all convenors surveyed (97%) made changes to their menus to remove RED food and drinks, and most reported increasing the availability of GREEN food and drinks (91%) and implementing strategies to ensure AMBER products do not dominate the choices available (84%).

Successful implementation in tuckshops could be attributed to a number of factors. QAST and Nutrition Australia were specifically funded to assist tuckshop convenors with the implementation of *Smart Choices*, which resulted in extensive targeted communications and provision of a range of services and learning opportunities. Also, more supporting agencies reported providing information relating to tuckshops than any other area of school food and drink supply. These and other communication strategies are likely to have been major contributors to the levels of understanding and confidence reported by tuckshop convenors. However, secondary schools appear to be having more challenges implementing *Smart Choices* in the tuckshop as they were more likely to report decreasing profits and being less satisfied with the range of products available for the menu compared to primary schools. Continued support is required to maintain the high level of implementation of *Smart Choices* in school tuckshops, especially in view of the high turnover of tuckshop convenors and P&C members within schools.

There were high levels of implementation of *Smart Choices* reported in breakfast programs, vending machines, as well as part of sponsorship and advertising. Not all schools have a breakfast program or vending machine or receive sponsorship; however, for the schools that do use these services, the food and drink provided is consistent with *Smart Choices* in the school. The DET sponsorship and advertising policy

was made consistent with *Smart Choices* as part of its revision in 2005.

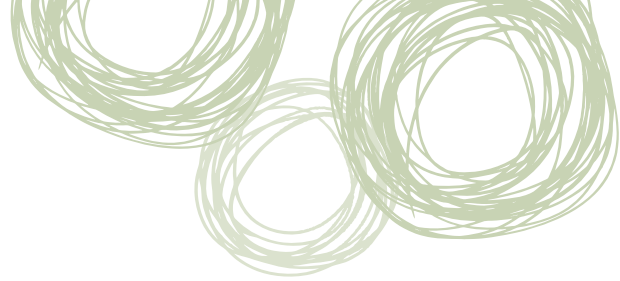
The areas of food and drink supply in schools where greater focus is needed include sporting events and clubs, fundraising, school events, class parties and student rewards.

School sports events and clubs are two areas of opportunity within schools to promote and model the benefits of healthy eating and being physically active. Children need to be physically active and to eat well for optimal growth and development, to achieve a healthy weight, to prevent chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease and type 2 diabetes later in life, and to maximise learning potential. Children can receive mixed messages when RED food and drinks are supplied on school sports days and at sporting clubs. Schools and the broader community have a role to promote and model healthy eating habits to children in combination with physical activity, and to take all opportunities to do so.

Fundraising activities based on RED food and drinks have been common in schools because they are easy to organise and they have high profit generating potential. It is therefore very encouraging that 80% of principals and 84% of P&Cs reported implementing *Smart Choices* in this area. This result indicates that schools have made significant changes to fundraising activities. However, with one in five schools not implementing *Smart Choices* in fundraising, combined with the low reported levels of belief that healthy fundraising can be financially viable in P&Cs (61% compared to 78% for tuckshops), more work is needed to improve confidence and ability to successfully fundraise without relying on RED food and drinks.

Classroom parties and student rewards based on RED food and drinks have been common in schools in the past. It is encouraging that many schools have implemented changes in this area; however, with one in four schools not implementing or unsure of implementation in these areas, further work is required to support and direct teachers to the alternatives available.

Some differences were also observed between urban and rural schools. Urban schools appear to face fewer barriers or issues to implementing *Smart Choices* than rural schools. Respondents from urban schools were significantly more likely to rate themselves higher on a ten point scale of implementation, report an increase in tuckshop profits, an increased availability of a range of GREEN food and drinks on tuckshop menus, and



have access to a greater range of healthy foods through suppliers and distributors than rural schools.

Few significant differences were observed in implementation of *Smart Choices* between primary and secondary schools. Differences were observed between special schools and primary and secondary schools. Special school principals were less likely to report arrangements were in place for implementing *Smart Choices*. Specifically, lower levels of implementation were reported for classroom rewards and school excursions. The complex student and curriculum needs in special schools compared to other schools need to be considered when interpreting these results.

Special school P&Cs were also less likely to report feeling confident to meet the requirements of *Smart Choices*. They reported lower levels of attendance at workshops and training other than the initial basic *Smart Choices* workshop. This is likely to be due to the fact that additional workshops were focused towards tuckshop convenors, and few special schools have a tuckshop convenor. Significantly lower levels of implementation of *Smart Choices* at school events were reported by special schools. This highlights the need to ensure resources, training and support are tailored to encompass the requirements of special schools.

The strategies put in place to support schools to implement *Smart Choices* have been effective in assisting the majority of schools to implement the strategy. However, further strategies are required to assist rural schools and special schools to address the specific challenges they face in implementing the strategy.

## Understanding

Dissemination of the *Smart Choices* resources was successfully achieved with nearly all principals (97%) and tuckshop convenors (96%), and most P&Cs (89%), accessing the *Smart Choices* strategy resource. Similar proportions of principals (86%), P&Cs (83%) and convenors (84%) reported accessing the Tool Kit. Of note, 11% of P&Cs reported not accessing the *Smart Choices* strategy resource. Changes in P&C membership that occur each year could explain this result. This reinforces the need for ongoing communication with all members of school communities about implementing *Smart Choices*.

The vast majority (range 93% to 99%) of P&Cs and tuckshop convenors reported they understood key

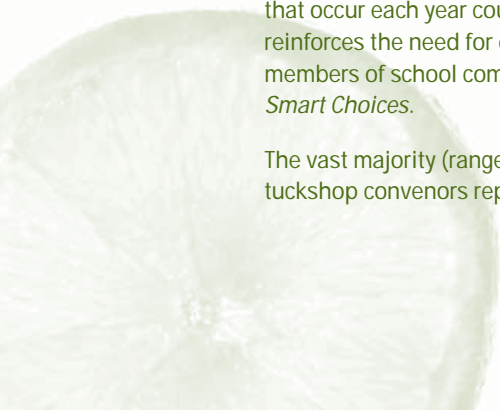
aspects of *Smart Choices*, such as how to use the GREEN, AMBER, RED food and drink supply spectrum, and expressed confidence that *Smart Choices* was being fully implemented. These results suggest that the *Smart Choices* resources met the needs of school communities throughout state schools in Queensland.

The results are very encouraging and indicate a high level of commitment and contribution from schools to access the strategy resources, attend information and training sessions, contact supporting agencies, and confidently implement *Smart Choices*. However, in some areas of food and drink supply, there was a gap between perceived implementation and actual implementation. For example, 93% of P&Cs believed they were fully implementing *Smart Choices* in their school, yet less than 85% reported implementing in fundraising, sporting events and sports clubs. Similar levels of implementation in these areas were reported by principals, even though most rated their schools as achieving eight or more on a ten point scale of implementation. This reinforces the need for further communication to principals and P&Cs to highlight that *Smart Choices* applies to these areas of the school environment.

Some differences were also observed between schools based on locality (rural or urban) and school type (primary, secondary or special school).

Respondents from schools in urban areas were more likely to report contacting support agencies and attending training seminars, and report understanding of *Smart Choices* as good or excellent. Tuckshop convenors from urban schools were also significantly more likely than those from rural schools to attend training or information sessions and participate in a convenor network meeting. It is not clear whether fewer opportunities for information and training were offered in rural areas, or whether barriers to attending were higher. It may be a combination of these factors. Importantly, these differences did not translate to differences in reported understanding or confidence, but may have contributed to urban schools being more likely than rural schools to have increased the range of GREEN products on the tuckshop menu.

Respondents from secondary schools were more likely to report contacting support agencies and attending training seminars, and report understanding of *Smart Choices* as good or excellent than those from primary schools. Tuckshop convenors from secondary schools were also significantly more likely than those from



primary schools to attend training or information sessions. Secondary school tuckshops are more likely to be open five days a week compared to primary school tuckshops, which may have affected the level of support or motivation to attend training or information sessions.

Given the higher level of reported understanding and engagement with outside agencies by urban schools and secondary schools, it might be expected that this would lead to higher levels of implementation. However, this was generally not observed in all areas. For example, primary school respondents were more likely to report implementation in curriculum activities, school excursions and fundraising activities than secondary school respondents.

Special school P&Cs reported feeling less confident than P&Cs from other schools that they met the requirements of *Smart Choices*, and were less likely than other P&Cs to report their understanding of *Smart Choices* as good or excellent. Despite these results, reported implementation across nearly all areas of school food and drink supply by special school P&Cs was not significantly different to other schools.

## Engagement

Schools engaged strongly with the *Smart Choices* strategy. They believed they have a role in promoting the health and wellbeing of students. This was demonstrated in the high level of support from principals and P&Cs for the importance of *Smart Choices* as a strategy to improve children's health (91% and 86% respectively), and in putting student health and wellbeing above profits from food and drink sales (90% and 91% respectively). The level of community concern about the current childhood obesity epidemic may have contributed to the attitudes and interest observed from schools.

About six out of ten principals, P&Cs and tuckshop convenors agreed that they received support from the school community to implement *Smart Choices*, and that this support increased in the 12 months prior to the survey. Schools clearly support the rationale and implementation of *Smart Choices*, yet four in ten schools reported they did not receive a lot of support from the school community. Recruiting members of the school community to be involved in school activities is commonly reported to be challenging, and this result is likely to be a reflection of this.

Almost all (99%) principals and P&Cs indicated that at least one method was used to communicate information about *Smart Choices*. Discussion at meetings and school newsletter updates were the two most frequently used methods of communication by both principals and P&Cs. Both methods are readily available and commonly used to communicate important school information. School websites were used by less than one in five schools, and could potentially be more fully used in the future.

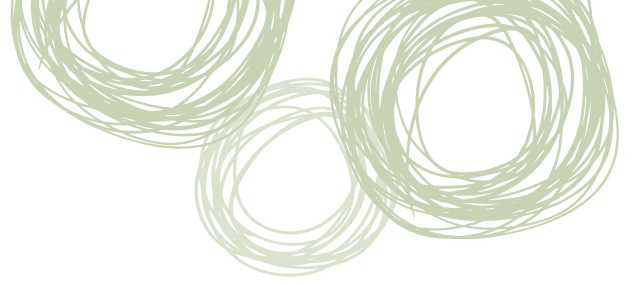
The vast majority of principals and P&Cs reported that arrangements were in place to limit the supply or sale of RED food and drinks across the school to no more than two occasions a term (97% and 93% respectively). While the exact nature of the arrangements were not investigated, this result indicates a high level of awareness, engagement and efforts to coordinate implementation across the school.

Some differences emerged between urban and rural schools. Principals from urban schools were more likely than those from rural schools to report arrangements were in place to limit RED occasions to no more than two occasions a term. Principals and P&Cs from urban schools were more likely to report positive experiences and attitudes, such as receiving a lot of support from the school community to implement *Smart Choices*, for this support to increase over time, and to support statements about *Smart Choices* and student health and wellbeing compared to respondents from rural schools.

## Limitations

The overall findings of this evaluation can be confidently considered to represent the implementation of the *Smart Choices* strategy in Queensland schools. Two limitations need to be considered — the representativeness of the sample and self-reporting bias.

All principals and P&Cs were invited to complete a survey. A total of 76% of principals responded to the online survey and were included in the final analysis. Around half (48%) of P&Cs returned the mail-back survey. This is considered a high response rate for the mail-back method of surveying. Caution must be taken in generalising the results of the analysis to all schools across Queensland. It is not known if the schools that did not respond to the survey were significantly different in implementation to the schools that did respond.



Comparison of P&C responses with non-responders suggest that rural primary schools and special schools were under-represented in the P&C responses, potentially skewing reported implementation in favour of urban primary and secondary schools. Once again, non-responders may have a different pattern of implementation.

The tuckshop convenor sample was selected randomly to represent all school tuckshops in Queensland with a high response rate (98%), so confidence in the results from this component of the evaluation is high.

The results of all three surveys (principal, P&C and tuckshop convenor) were based on self-reported implementation, which is not as objective as results based on recorded observations. However, the high level of consistency between three groups of respondents within the school community supports that self-report was a useful measure of implementation in this study.

Despite these limitations, results from this evaluation are plausible and indicate strengths and limitations in implementation generally consistent with where program resources were allocated. There is no evidence to suggest that actual implementation of the strategy was significantly different to that reported.

## Conclusions

*Smart Choices* is one initiative in a broad Queensland Government agenda to tackle the childhood obesity epidemic and improve children's health through better nutrition. The goal of the *Smart Choices* strategy is to ensure that food and drink supplied in Queensland state schools is consistent with the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* and the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*.

The findings from this evaluation indicate that, on the whole, schools implemented *Smart Choices* across all areas of food and drink supply, with very high levels of implementation achieved in the tuckshop, breakfast

programs and curriculum activities. Moderate levels of implementation were reported in school sporting events and sports clubs, fundraising events, classroom rewards and class parties. Responses from principals, P&Cs and tuckshop convenors were highly consistent.

More positive findings across a range of implementation, understanding and engagement measures were reported in urban compared to rural schools, and secondary compared primary schools. Implementation tended to be slightly lower in special schools than in other schools.

The resources and support provided by government and non-government agencies were widely utilised by schools and assisted them in implementing the *Smart Choices* strategy.

## Recommendations

As a result of undertaking this evaluation of *Smart Choices*, the following recommendations are made to ensure that the strategy continues to be an effective initiative to improve food and drink supply in schools:

- Provide ongoing support to maintain the implementation of *Smart Choices* in the tuckshop and vending machines and strengthen implementation of *Smart Choices* in school sporting events and clubs, fundraising events, classroom rewards and class parties (DET and Queensland Health).
- Implement a process to ensure the *Smart Choices* strategy keeps pace with changes in food supply and the food industry (Queensland Health).
- Maximise the benefits of existing funding and award programs by promoting the programs to schools and disseminating the experiences and knowledge of schools that participate (DET and Queensland Health).
- Develop an implementation plan to action the recommendations of this report (DET and Queensland Health).



# Appendices

## Appendix 1 — Principals survey

### **Smart Choices strategy resources**

Three resources were produced to support the implementation of *Smart Choices*:

- *Smart Choices – Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools* — sent to all schools and parent associations in July 2005
- *Smart Choices Tool Kit* — sent to all schools in March 2006
- *Smart Choices* website located on the Department of Education and Training website.

Q1. Have you accessed the following (yes/no/not sure)?

- a. *Smart Choices – Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools*
- b. *Smart Choices Tool kit*
- c. *Smart Choices* website

Q2. Overall, how would you rate your understanding of *Smart Choices* (excellent/good/average/fair/poor/not sure)?

Q3. Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements (strongly agree/agree/neither agree or disagree/disagree/strongly disagree):

- a. *Smart Choices* is an important strategy to improve children's health
- b. Our school received a lot of support from the school community to implement *Smart Choices*
- c. Support for *Smart Choices* among the school community has increased over the past 12 months
- d. Our school always puts student health and wellbeing before profits from food and drink sales

### Extent of *Smart Choices* implementation

*Smart Choices* groups food and drinks into three categories according to their nutritional value: GREEN, AMBER, RED.

GREEN food and drinks should be encouraged and promoted. Examples include breads and cereal foods, fruit, vegetables, lean meat, fish, poultry and alternatives, reduced fat dairy products, and water.

AMBER food and drinks should be selected carefully. Examples include full fat dairy foods, fruit juice, processed meats, reduced fat pies and other pastries, and snack foods.

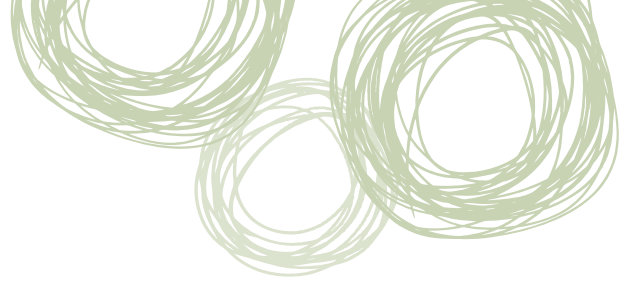
RED food and drinks, which have limited nutritional value, should be limited in their supply to students to no more than two occasions per term across the whole school environment. Examples include confectionery, soft drinks, premium ice creams, deep fried foods and cakes, muffins and sweet pastries.

Q4. Are arrangements in place to ensure that the supply or sale of RED food and drinks is limited to no more than two occasions per term (yes/no/not sure)?

### **Smart Choices** implementation across the whole school environment

Q5. Please indicate whether *Smart Choices* is implemented in the following areas of your school (yes/no/not sure/not applicable):

- a. All vending machines accessible to students stock only food and drinks from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- b. All vending machines in the school accessible to students advertise only food and drinks from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- c. At all school camps the majority of food and drinks supplied by the school to students are from the GREEN and AMBER categories
- d. All food and drinks supplied by the school to students at class parties are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- e. The majority of food and drinks used in curriculum activities are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- f. No RED foods or drinks or vouchers for RED foods or drinks are supplied to students by school staff as rewards including chocolate and other confectionary
- g. RED food and drinks used in curriculum activities fit the context of the activity
- h. All food and drinks supplied during breakfast programs are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- i. All sponsorship arrangements and advertising involving food and drinks are for products from the GREEN or AMBER categories



Q6. The *Smart Choices* strategy allows schools to supply RED food and drinks on no more than two occasions per term. Other than on these occasions, please indicate whether (yes/no/not sure/not applicable):

- a. All food and drinks supplied at the school tuckshop are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- b. All food and drinks supplied by the school on school excursions are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- c. All food and drinks used in fundraising events or activities where students are directly engaged in the activity and/or the main target for the activity are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- d. Only food and drinks from the GREEN or AMBER categories are supplied or offered for sale at school events focused on students
- e. All food and drinks prepared by students which are then supplied or sold to other students are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- f. All food and drinks supplied or offered for sale at school sporting events are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- g. All food and drinks supplied or offered for sale through school sporting clubs are from the GREEN or AMBER categories

Q7. On a scale of one (not implemented) to ten (fully implemented), overall, how would you rate the extent of implementation of *Smart Choices* in your school?

### **Smart Choices** communication

Q8. Has your school communicated information about *Smart Choices* and the school's plans for change to the school community using any of the following methods (yes/no/not sure)?

- a. Conducted an information session
- b. School newsletter updates
- c. Placed information on the school website
- d. Discussed *Smart Choices* at meetings
- e. Made announcements (e.g. at assembly)
- f. Displayed information at the tuckshop

Q9. What was the main consultation process your school used to engage the school community in implementation of *Smart Choices*?

- a. Existing committee
- b. New committee formed
- c. Informal meetings and/or discussions
- d. No consultation
- e. Other please specify

Q10. Did your school contact any of the following organisations in relation to implementing *Smart Choices* (yes/no/not sure)?

- a. Education Queensland Central Office
- b. *Smart Choices* District Contact
- c. Community Participation Officer
- d. Queensland Health staff
- e. Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Association
- f. Nutrition Australia



## Appendix 2 — Parents and Citizens' Association survey

### Section 1 - *Smart Choices* strategy resources and support for implementation

Three *Smart Choices* resources are:

- *Smart Choices – Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools* — sent to all schools and parent associations in July 2005
- *Smart Choices Tool Kit* — sent to all schools and parent associations in March 2006
- *Smart Choices* website located on the Education Queensland website ([www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/food-drink-strategy](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/food-drink-strategy))

Q1. Have you accessed the following (yes/no/not sure)?

- a. *Smart Choices – Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools*
- b. *Smart Choices* Tool kit
- c. *Smart Choices* website

Q2. Did a P&C Executive attend any of the following information sessions (yes/no/not sure)?

- a. QCPCA and QAST *Smart Choices* Seminar
- b. (Conducted by the Queensland Association of School Tuckshops and Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations during 2006)
- c. Any other information session on *Smart Choices*

Q3. Did the P&C contact any of the following in relation to implementing *Smart Choices* (yes/no/not sure)?

- a. Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Association
- b. Queensland Association of School Tuckshops
- c. Nutrition Australia
- d. Education Queensland Central Office, Brisbane
- e. *Smart Choices* District Contact
- f. Community Participation Officer
- g. Principal
- h. Queensland Health staff
- i. Other

Q4. Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the resources, information sessions and contacts available (very satisfied/satisfied/neither satisfied or dissatisfied/dissatisfied/very dissatisfied/did not access any resources, information sessions or support)?

Q5. Does your P&C Association (yes/no/not sure):

- a. Understand how *Smart Choices* applies to all areas of the school environment
- b. Feel confident that the P&C meets the requirements of *Smart Choices*
- c. Feel confident that the P&C can determine what situations would be counted as a RED occasion
- d. Understand what types of food and drinks fit into the GREEN, AMBER and RED categories

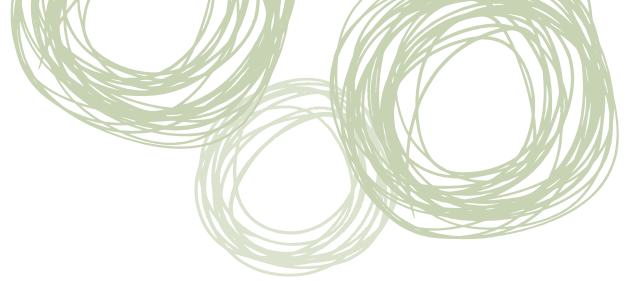
Q6. Overall, how would you rate the P&C Association's understanding of *Smart Choices* (excellent/good/average/fair/poor/not sure)?

### Section 2 – *Smart Choices* implementation across the whole school environment

*Smart Choices* groups food and drinks into three categories according to their nutritional value: GREEN, AMBER, RED.

- GREEN food and drinks should be encouraged and promoted. Examples include breads and cereal foods, fruit, vegetables, lean meat, fish, poultry and alternatives, reduced fat dairy products, and water.
- AMBER food and drinks should be selected carefully. Examples include full fat dairy foods, fruit juice, processed meats, reduced fat pies and other pastries, and snack foods.
- RED food and drinks, which have limited nutritional value, should be limited in their supply to students to no more than two occasions per term across the whole school environment. Examples include confectionery, soft drinks, premium ice creams, deep fried foods and cakes, muffins and sweet pastries.

Q7. Are arrangements in place to ensure that the supply or sale of RED food and drinks is limited to no more than two occasions per term across the whole school environment (yes/no/not sure)?



Q8. Indicate whether *Smart Choices* is implemented in the following P&C operations in your school (yes/no/not sure/not applicable, e.g. no vending machines):

- a. All vending machines operated by the P&C accessible to students stock only food and drinks from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- b. All vending machines operated by the P&C in the school accessible to students advertise only food and drinks from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- c. All food and drinks supplied during breakfast programs are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- d. All sponsorship arrangements and advertising involving food and drinks are for products from the GREEN or AMBER categories

Q9. Other than on the two occasions per term when RED food and drinks can be supplied (yes/no/not sure/not applicable, e.g. no vending machines):

- a. All food and drinks supplied at the school tuckshop are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- b. All food and drinks used in fundraising events or activities where students are directly engaged in the activity and/or the main target for the activity are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- c. Only food and drinks from the GREEN or AMBER categories are supplied or offered for sale at school/P&C events focused on students
- d. All food and drinks supplied or offered for sale at school sporting events are from the GREEN or AMBER categories
- e. All food and drinks supplied or offered for sale through school/P&C sporting clubs, (e.g. swim clubs) are from the GREEN or AMBER categories

Q10. Has your P&C communicated information about *Smart Choices* and plans for change to the school community using any of the following methods (yes/no/not sure)?

- a. Conducted an information session
- b. Trained employees

- c. Informed volunteers
- d. School newsletter updates
- e. Placed information on the school website/internet
- f. Discussed *Smart Choices* at meetings
- g. Made announcements (e.g. at assembly)
- h. Displayed information at the tuckshop

Q11. What was the main consultation process your P&C used to engage with the school community to implement *Smart Choices*? Was it through (tick one only):

- a. Existing committee
- b. New committee formed e.g. *Smart Choices* committee
- c. Informal meetings/discussions
- d. No consultation
- e. Other (please specify):

Q12. Does the P&C agree or disagree with the following statements (strongly agree/agree/neither agree or disagree/disagree/strongly disagree):

- a. *Smart Choices* is an important strategy to improve children's health
- b. The P&C received a lot of support from the whole school community to implement *Smart Choices*
- c. Support for *Smart Choices* among the school community has increased over the past 12 months
- d. Our school always puts student health and wellbeing before profits from food and drink sales
- e. A healthy school tuckshop can be financially viable
- f. Healthy fundraising alternatives can be financially viable

Q13. Since making *Smart Choices* changes in the tuckshop, have the profits (increased/decreased/no change/not sure/the P&C does not operate a tuckshop)

Any other comments?



## Appendix 3 — Tuckshop convenor survey

1. Is the tuckshop open from Monday to Friday?
  - a. Yes [if yes, go to Question 3]
  - b. No
2. [If no] How many days a week is the tuckshop open?
  - a. One day
  - b. Two days
  - c. Three days
  - d. Four days
  - e. Other type in explanation
  - f. Less than once/week

3. Is the tuckshop:
  - a. P&C operated
  - b. Leased
  - c. Education Queensland or school operated
  - d. Other [type in response]
  - e. Don't know

The following questions ask about the *Smart Choices* resources, and supports available to help with implementation.

The *Smart Choices* Strategy was distributed to schools in July 2005. It has a green and yellow cover and includes listings of GREEN, AMBER and RED food and drinks, and a table used to work out if a food or drink falls into the RED category.

4. Have you accessed a copy of the *Smart Choices* Strategy (yes/no/not sure)?

The *Smart Choices* Tool Kit was sent to all schools in March 2006 and includes information about planning for the changes in schools and tuckshop management and operation issues.

5. Have you accessed a copy of the *Smart Choices* Tool Kit (yes/no/not sure)?

6. How often do you refer to these resources, either the *Smart Choices* strategy or tool kit, would it be [read out]:
  - a. At least once a week (all the time)
  - b. At least once a month (often)
  - c. At least once a term or four times a year (sometimes)
  - d. Less than two times a year (rarely)
  - e. Have not referred to in the past 12 months (never)

7. Have you or other tuckshop staff or volunteers attended any of the following information sessions in the past 12 months [read out each option] (yes/no/don't know)?
  - a. A *Smart Choices* Seminar held in each education district in 2006 by the Queensland Association of School Tuckshops, known as QAST, and Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations, known as QCPCA
  - b. An Information session conducted by staff from Education Queensland, Queensland Health, QAST or Nutrition Australia
  - c. A Tuckshop Convenor network meeting
  - d. The TAFE Course on Operating a Healthy School Tuckshop or Canteen?

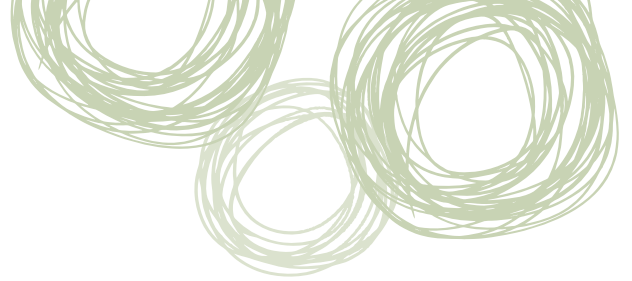
8. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
  - a. I am confident I can determine if a food or drink falls into the RED category
  - b. I understand what types of food and drinks fit into the AMBER and GREEN categories
  - c. I am confident that our school tuckshop meets the requirements of the *Smart Choices* Strategy

9. Overall, would you say your understanding of *Smart Choices* is:

- a. Excellent
- b. Good
- c. Average
- d. Fair
- e. Poor
- f. Not sure

### Tuckshop menu planning

10. Have you used a buying guide or product list to choose suitable GREEN and AMBER products for the tuckshop menu (yes/no) [if no, go to question 12]?
11. [If yes] Which buyers guide or product lists would that be? [multiple responses allowed read out]:
  - a. FOCiS Registered Product List (maybe also known as QAST list)
  - b. QAST Trades and Services Directory
  - c. Healthy kids School Canteen Buyers Guide (NSW School Canteen Association) (the blue and yellow book)
  - d. Food company product list (e.g. Chickadee, Golden Circle)



- e. Supplier/distributor list (e.g. Canteen supplies/ Quality foods)
- f. Other — specify

In *Smart Choices*, GREEN food and drinks should be encouraged and promoted. Examples include breads and cereals, fruits, vegetables, lean meat, fish, poultry and meat alternatives, reduced fat dairy products, and water.

12. Compared with 12 months ago, has the availability of GREEN food and drinks increased on the tuckshop menu?

- a. Yes
- b. No [if no, go to Question 14]
- c. No but changes made prior to this
- d. Don't know [go to question 14]

13. Which of the following GREEN food and drinks are now more available [read out each option] (yes/no/don't know)?

- a. Fruit
- b. Vegetables
- c. Low or reduced fat dairy products such as milks, yoghurt and cheese
- d. Wholegrain foods such as wholemeal bread and brown rice
- e. Plain water

14. Have any promotions of GREEN food and drinks been conducted in the tuckshop in the last 12 months?

- a. Yes
- b. No [go to question 16]
- c. Don't know [go to question 16]

15. [if yes] Which of the following methods of promotion were used [read out each option] (yes/no/don't know)?

- a. Meal deals
- b. Daily or weekly specials
- c. Taste tests
- d. Special theme days or weeks
- e. Notices in the school newsletter
- f. Informing students at assembly
- g. Signage, posters or displays
- h. Classroom flyers or announcements by teachers in class
- i. Competitions

AMBER food and drinks should be selected carefully on the tuckshop menu. Examples of AMBER food and drinks include full fat dairy foods, fruit juice, processed meats, reduced fat pies and other pastries, plain ice creams and snack foods.

16. Have any of the following strategies been used to ensure AMBER food and drinks do not dominate the menu choices [Read out each option] (yes/no/don't know)?

- a. Offering smaller serving sizes of AMBER products wherever possible
- b. Offering a particular AMBER product on fewer days per week
- c. Limiting availability of some AMBER products to only certain times of the day
- d. Limiting the number of packs or servings sold per student

RED food and drinks have limited nutritional value. They can only be supplied to students on no more than two occasions per term across the whole school environment. Examples of RED products include confectionery, soft drinks, chocolate coated ice creams, deep fried foods and cakes, muffins and sweet pastries.

17. Have all RED food and drinks been removed from the tuckshop?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

18. Were any difficulties encountered with removing RED food and drinks from the tuckshop menu?

- a. Yes
- b. No [go to question 20]
- c. Don't know [go to question 20]

19. [if yes] Which of the following types of difficulties did you encounter [read out each option]?

- a. Lack of support from the school community
- b. Concern over loss of profits
- c. Lack of demand for healthy foods by students
- d. Problems managing the change, for example, the changes require too much time
- e. Difficulty accessing suitable GREEN or AMBER products
- f. Other specify

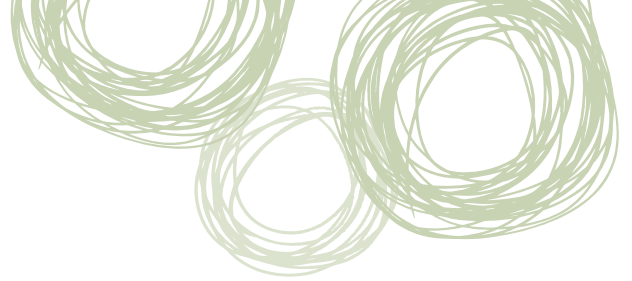
20. Are any of the following products sold at the tuckshop [read out each option] (yes/no/don't know)?

- a. Small packets of chips
- b. Hot tea and/or coffee
- c. Coffee flavoured milks
- d. Jelly
- e. Carbonated or fizzy fruit juices
- f. 100% fruit juice in serve sizes greater than 250 ml

21. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- a. We have received a lot of support from our school community to implement *Smart Choices* in the tuckshop
- b. I have noticed that more, healthier products are available from suppliers and distributors in the last 12 months
- c. Our tuckshop has reliable regular access to healthier products through our distributors and suppliers
- d. I am satisfied with the range of GREEN and AMBER products I can access
- e. A healthy school tuckshop is financially viable





## Appendix 4 — Agency assistance and support survey

1. What type of support or assistance have you provided to state schools (Please mark all relevant boxes)?

- Organised or presented at a *Smart Choices* workshop or forum
- Participated as a member of a school committee
- Presented or discussed *Smart Choices* at meetings, such as school committees or P&C meetings
- Facilitated or presented to a tuckshop convenor network meeting
- Reviewed tuckshop menus
- Developed new resources specific to *Smart Choices*
- Provided written information, such as newsletters or fact sheets
- General support or advice in person or by phone
- Other, please specify:

2. Who have you provided support or assistance to (Please mark all relevant boxes)?

- Principal
- Teachers
- P&C Committee
- Tuckshop convenor
- Parents
- Other agencies or staff supporting schools
- Other, please specify:

3. What aspects of *Smart Choices* have you provided assistance or support on (Please mark all relevant boxes)?

- General information about *Smart Choices*
- Sourcing healthier food and drink products
- Healthy tuckshop food and drink ideas
- Healthy fundraising ideas
- Food and drink marketing ideas
- Classroom rewards
- Curriculum activities
- Menu ideas for sports days/events
- Menu ideas for special days/events
- Healthy vending machine options
- Menu ideas for breakfast programs
- Menu ideas for school camps
- Menu ideas for school excursions
- Promotion of water
- General nutrition information for children
- Other, please specify:

4. Have you accessed any of the following *Smart Choices* resources (Please mark all relevant boxes)?

	Yes	No
a. <i>Smart Choices — Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. <i>Smart Choices</i> Tool Kit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. <i>Smart Choices</i> website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Which agency do you work for?

- Education Queensland
- Queensland Health
- Non-government organisation
- Community organisation
- Other, please specify:

6. What is your position?

- Smart Choices* District Contact
- Community Participation Officer
- Community Nutritionist
- Advanced Health Worker (Nutrition Promotion)
- Public Health Nutritionist
- Nutrition Promotion Officer
- Community Dietitian
- Dietitian/Nutritionist
- School Based Youth Health Nurse
- Child Health Nurse
- Health Promotion Officer
- Oral Health Professional
- Other, please specify:

7. Any other comments about the support you have provided to schools?

