

## MEDIA RELEASE

# Healthy food choices on the menu in Boort

Boort District Health (BDH) is making it much easier for staff and visitors to make healthier food and drink choices, by implementing a traffic light system of Red (limit), Amber (choose carefully) and Green (best choices) that forms part of the Victorian Government's Healthy Choices guidelines. In doing so we have significantly increased our range of healthier food and drink options. The Healthy Choices framework was developed to help make sure that healthy foods and drinks are offered and promoted in places like hospitals, health services and workplaces.

Dr Bruce Bolam, Victoria's Chief Preventive Health Officer, has applauded the efforts of all those involved at BDH, "As a community focal point for health leadership, hospitals and health services that provide healthier food and drink options triple the benefits: for patients, staff, and the community that visit."

To comply with the Healthy Choices guidelines, retail outlets need to provide at least 50% Green and no more than 20% Red. And when catering for meetings and functions provide no Red items.

The Spanner Café has recently introduced a new healthy menu that reflects the Healthy Choices guidelines. Using the guidelines, our Café has increased the Green food offered to 60%, decreased the amount of Amber food offered by 11% and Red items now comprise only 7% of the menu. BDH has achieved this by significantly reducing the availability of sugary drinks, limiting sale of confectionary and sugary snacks, and making simple changes to the existing menu, such as swapping full-fat milk and cheese for reduced fat options.

Our catering menu for meetings and functions now offers gourmet sandwiches, wraps, fresh fruit, fruit and cheese platters and fresh yogurt.

BDH is very keen to support healthy eating in the workplace. Our Nutrition and Hydration Working Party has introduced our workplace "healthy eating" policy to promote healthy workplace eating. Staff have also started walking groups as a way of increasing physical activity.

Having a healthy workforce is really important. It also helps reinforce healthy choices in the community when our staff role model good eating choices.

We've also had assistance from the Healthy Eating Advisory Service, which is funded by the Victorian Government to support organisations to implement the Healthy Choices guidelines.

Emily Scott, dietitian at the Healthy Eating Advisory Service, said "Boort District Health has shown amazing determination and commitment to the cause. They've gone above and beyond the minimum requirements, by removing almost all Red items from their Spanner café."

"Introducing a healthy eating policy and staff training will ensure their commitment to promoting healthy foods and drinks becomes business as usual."

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**Authorised:** Darren Clarke, BDH Chief Executive Officer