



All four Latrobe Leisure centres increased the amount of **GREEN** options and reduced **RED** options between 2015 and 2016, with the help of the Healthy Eating Advisory Service.



The management of Latrobe Leisure have showed leadership by supporting healthy changes in all four community leisure centres.

## Background

Since 2014, Latrobe Leisure has been using the Victorian Government's [Healthy Choices guidelines](#)<sup>1</sup> to increase the availability of healthier foods and drinks in kiosks, cafés and vending machines at four centres: Moe Newborough, Morwell, Churchill and Traralgon Sports Stadium.

This is part of the wider 'Healthy Food Choices in Latrobe' initiative, led by Latrobe City Council (LCC) and Latrobe Community Health Service (LCHS), which advocated to the Latrobe Leisure general manager to secure participation at the highest level. The management's belief was that it's their responsibility to set a healthy and positive example for their staff and community.

## The situation

In 2015, the Healthy Eating Advisory Service (HEAS) assessed menus from each kiosk or café, and recommended healthy changes. Latrobe Leisure staff also completed training about the Healthy Choices guidelines, healthy food and drink swaps and healthier cooking techniques.

Menus at all four leisure centres were reassessed in 2016 to see what had changed and how each centre was progressing towards the Healthy Choices target of at least 50% **GREEN** items, and no more than 20% **RED**.

## What has changed?

Since 2015, all four Latrobe Leisure centres have made massive improvement to their menus.

In 2016, the average amount of **GREEN** options increased from 8% to 28%, while the average amount of **RED** options reduced from 71% to 56%.

More specifically:

- there are more **GREEN** and **AMBER** drinks at each outlet, like reduced fat flavoured milk and smaller bottles of 99% fruit juices
- the amount of soft drinks has been reduced, and some come in smaller sizes
- all centres now offer fresh fruit (like apples, bananas and mandarins), as well as fruit in yoghurt or fruit tubs with natural juice, which are popular with kids
- there are more vegetables on the menu, like veggies in sandwiches, and a greater variety of salad options.

## Marketing healthier choices

In addition to menu changes, all centres removed any signage and branding that was associated with unhealthy foods or drinks.

Large signs on the sides of drinks fridges that promoted soft drinks were replaced with decals of bottled water. And some drinks fridges were placed behind the counter out of customers' sight. Some centres also displayed confectionery in plain containers without any branding.

Latrobe Leisure also displayed 'Make a Healthier Choice' signage (see left) to help customers identify and choose healthier options. This included posters and labelling the foods and drinks with **GREEN**, **AMBER** or **RED** dots.

## Impact on sales

In 2016, sales of **GREEN** food and drinks had increased by 4%, while sales of **RED** items dropped by 7%.

Initially, **RED** items continued to make the biggest contribution to total sales overall, however customer purchasing behaviour shifted as time went on.

Latrobe Leisure intends to monitor sales data and customer feedback to drive healthier food and drinks choices, and continue implementing Healthy Choices in their centres.

## Managing challenges

The main difficulty that Latrobe Leisure staff experienced was sourcing new **GREEN** and **AMBER** items to stock in the kiosks and café. This was mainly because there is limited ability to prepare fresh food on site, so they rely on packaged items which are generally less healthy.

And being in a regional location, there was a limited variety of suppliers to order **GREEN** and **AMBER** items from. The centres are working with Latrobe City Council and Latrobe Community Health Service and the Healthy Eating Advisory Service on ways to identify and source healthier products.

## Future directions

Latrobe City Council and Latrobe Community Health Service are committed to assisting Latrobe Leisure to fully implement the Healthy Choices guidelines, and to meet the targets of more than 50% **GREEN** and less than 20% **RED** choices across the centres.

Latrobe Leisure staff have identified opportunities to collaborate and share ideas and information about healthier food and drink options suitable for their kiosks and café, such as conducting short-term trials of different food and drink options, and sourcing healthier foods and drinks from local suppliers.



*"We are here to provide a service to the community; therefore profit should not be the primary focus.*

*Helping people make healthier choices should be the most important goal."*

**Latrobe Leisure centre manager.**

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