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Fruit and vegetables good for the wallet and the waist

NSW Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, today released a new report card that reveals despite a serious drought and recent floods, fruit and vegetables and other healthy foods were much cheaper than junk food.

Mr Della Bosca said *The Real Cost of Healthy Food Report Card* - released as part of the NSW Government's *Go for 2&5 campaign* - found healthy food was less than one third the price of junk food alternatives, on average, when compared on a kilogram by kilogram basis.

"Many people think fast food is the cheapest way to grab a snack or have a quick bite to eat," the Minister said.

"But the report card, developed by the NSW Government in partnership with the Dietitians Association of Australia, reveals junk food is neither cheap nor healthy.

"Eating healthy food is not only good for your waist but it also good for your wallet and in these tough economic times that is an important factor for families across the State when planning for meals.

"While the cost of fruits and vegetables are subject to variation, they can still work out to be a more cost effective option when considered on a kilogram by kilogram basis - even in the current climate where fruit and vegetable prices have increased in response to a spate of natural disasters," the Minister said.

For example:

Less healthy foods		Healthy alternative
• Banana muffin - \$12	versus	Banana - \$4.72
• Chocolate - \$17.90	versus	Dried sultanas - \$6.45
• Fruit bar - \$25.80	versus	Apple - \$4.29
• Potato chips - \$19.90	versus	Popping corn - \$3

"And when comparing a healthy daily menu with a less healthy menu, the savings can add up to \$851 per person each year," Mr Della Bosca said.

"By eating healthier, families not only save money but they can prevent obesity.

"Many snack foods tend to be higher in kilojoules and fat and contain fewer nutrients, which is a dangerous recipe when combined with our increasingly sedentary lifestyles.

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“With 50 per cent of adults either overweight or obese and an increase in childhood obesity in recent years it is important we keep our weight under control to avoid chronic disease, such as diabetes and heart disease.

“Preventing chronic disease keeps people out of the Emergency Departments of our public hospital and helps alleviate pressure on our hard-working hospital staff – which is vital as we plan for the challenges ahead in dealing with an ageing and growing population,” the Minister said.

“Maintaining a healthy diet that comprises two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables is an easy way to tackle this problem without blowing the family budget, which is a real concern for NSW families,” he said.

“The Go for 2&5® campaign provides a range of practical solutions to help people incorporate more fruit and vegetables in to their diet, including tips on how to make sensible savings along the way.”

The report card can be accessed online at www.gofor2and5.com.au

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