

## **The cost of eating well in the City of Greater Dandenong**

**“Food for Everybody” Annual Pricing Survey, November 2007**

### **Healthy Food Access Basket (HFAB)**

Historically the HFAB has been undertaken by Queensland Health to monitor the cost of food since 1999 in urban, rural and remote settings. Likewise municipalities across Victoria have adopted this practice of collecting food pricing data, such as in Darebin, Casey & the Mornington Peninsula.

Data was collected in the City of Greater Dandenong in September of 2007, repeating the survey collected late in 2006. Routinely HFAB data is used to analyse the affordability of eating well, to monitor price changes over time (particularly for fresh fruit and vegetables which appear to be subject to greater price variation than many other foods) and the data used to advocate for low income families, individuals and couples about the real cost of eating to the current recommendations as outlined in The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE). The findings also inform community based education programs about eating well.

### **HFAB Tool selection**

Data was collected in the City of Greater Dandenong using the Illawarra Healthy Food Price Index developed by University of Wollongong. This tool has been validated and results peer reviewed on several occasions. This tool was selected because the social profile and income of Illawarra is similar to CGD. Also in formulating the list of

foods University of Wollongong used the AGHE and Recommended Daily Intake (NHMRC) for a reference family to formulate the lists of foods and like wise consulted with the two major supermarket chains to collect data about the most commonly purchased foods.

The list of foods in the basket is compiled for a fictional family of 5: a 5 year old male, a 15 year old female, a 39 year old male and female and a 65 year old female. The food represents a **nutritionally adequate weekly food basket** for the reference family and contains 57 foods (44 core foods and 13 "sometimes" foods). Please see attachment 1 for the list of foods and quantities for which pricing was collected.

### **Methodology**

Most local supermarkets (12) were approached and invited to permit the data collection proposed (see letter attachment 3). All of the supermarkets agreed to participate. In 11 supermarkets data was collected, 4 (of 15) were excluded due to an inadequate stock range. These stores were ultimately more like convenience stores rather than supermarkets. Data on the price of fruit and vegetables were also collected in 10 local green grocers and 4 (20%) stalls at the Dandenong Market (where price variation is minimal).

## **Results & Discussion**

### **Supermarkets**

<b>Cost of weekly HFAB 2007</b>	
<b>Price range</b>	\$219.32 to \$ 326.83
<b>Average</b>	\$284.13

Pricing for the CGD HFAB conducted in the supermarkets varied from \$219.32 to \$ 326.83 for the basket. This variation in the relatively small geographic area of CGD was also observed last year. This type of variation has previously been observed in QLD between urban and rural/remote settings. The average price for the basket was \$284.13. Five baskets were below the average price and 6 above. Please see Appendix 4 for a summary of findings

### **Fruit and vegetable basket**

<b>Results</b>	
Supermarkets	\$78.61
Green Grocers	\$62.63
Dandenong Market	\$56.26

The price of the fruit and vegetable basket averaged \$ 78.61 in the supermarkets, \$62.63 in the local green grocers and \$56.26 in the Dandenong markets. This price variation repeated the result from last year that fruit and vegetables are less affordable in the supermarket environment and are cheapest at the Dandenong Market, though the

difference is not as great as last year. **For each dollar spent at the Dandenong Market on fruit and vegetables the cost is \$1.39 (2006 = \$1.45) in the supermarkets and \$1.11 (2006 = \$1.25) in the local green grocers.** This would suggest that the prices in local green grocers are becoming more competitive with the market.

In 2007 the price of bananas has returned to a much more reasonable level, with the high prices of 2006 as a result of cyclone Larry and the consequent lack of supply resolving. Excluding the price of bananas the pricing obtained for the fruit and vegetable weekly basket was

- \$55.15 in supermarkets,
- \$42.46 in green grocers and
- \$33.73 in Dandenong Market.

**2007 Supermarket HFAB Results versus 2006**

<b>Cost of weekly HFAB 2006</b>		<b>Cost of weekly HFAB 2007</b>	
<b>Price range</b>	\$259.54 to \$342.45	Price range	\$219.32 to \$326.83
<b>Average</b>	\$296.50	Average	\$284.13

The cost of eating well in the City of Greater Dandenong has decreased in the last year due to the greatly reduced cost of bananas at the time of the 2007 survey versus the data obtained in 2006. **However if the price of bananas is excluded the price of the basket has increased by 6.7%. This is far greater than the reported CPI which is 1.9 % for the 12 months to September 2007.**

### **Fruit and vegetable prices 2007 versus 2006**

<b>Results F &amp; V Only <u>excl Bananas</u></b>	2007	2006	% change
Supermarkets	\$55.15	\$52.30	+ 5.4%
Green Grocers	\$42.46	\$45.24	- 6.1%
Dandenong Market	\$33.73	\$36.06	- 6.5%

Between November 2006 and September 2007 the price of the fruit and vegetable basket (excluding bananas) has decreased in CGD when looking at green grocer and Dandenong market prices and increased in the supermarkets. This is interesting to compare with the contribution of fruit and vegetables to CPI (data collected in supermarkets nationally), which overall increased by approximately 9 % for fruit and for vegetables.

<b><u>CITY OF GREATER</u></b>				
<b><u>DANDENONG HEALTHY FOOD</u></b>				
<b><u>ACCESS BASKET SURVEY</u></b>				
<b><u>NOV 2007</u></b>				
Supermarket Name & Address:	Date:			
<b>FOOD ITEM</b>	<b>BRAND</b>	<b>PACK SIZE</b>	<b>PRICE</b>	<b>QTY FOR FAMILY</b>
<b><u>Breads &amp; Cereals</u></b>				
Crispbread	Paradise Lites	200g		500g
Crumpets		Pack of 6		1100g
Fruit Toast		650g		1300g
Quick Cooking Oats		1kg		500g
Sultana Bran	Kelloggs	725g		200g
Wheat biscuit breakfast cereal (Weetbix, Vita Brits or Golden Wheats)	Sanitarium, Uncle Tobys or Kelloggs	1kg		465g
White Hamburger Buns		Pack of 6		450g
White Rice, long grain		2kg		830g
White Spaghetti		500g		600g
Wholemeal bread		680g		3.40kg
<b><u>Milk, Yoghurt &amp; Cheese</u></b>				
Cheddar cheese, reduced fat	Bodella or Bega	750g		610g
Low fat vanilla yoghurt		1kg		4.4kg
Reduced fat milk		3 litres		11.75L
<b><u>Vegetables &amp; legumes</u></b>				
Baked beans, salt reduced		425g		1100g

Frozen mixed vegetables		1kg		840g
Frozen peas		2kg		300g
Canned Tomatoes, no added salt		810g		990g
Canned corn kernels		420g		350g
Tomato paste, no added salt		140g		130g
Avocado		220g		220g
Broccoli		1kg		640g
Brown Onions		1kg		1.3kg
Carrots		1kg		1.86kg
Lettuce		340g		340g
Mushrooms		1kg		900g
Potatoes		1kg		2.5kg
Tomatoes		1kg		3kg
Zucchini		1kg		750g
<b><u>Fruit</u></b>				
Apples		1kg		1.1kg
Bananas		1kg		6.2kg
Kiwi fruit		1kg		800g
Oranges		1kg		1.95kg
Canned peaches, in juice		1kg		960g
Orange Juice, no added sugar		2litres		5.75L
<b><u>Meat, fish, poultry, eggs &amp; nuts</u></b>				
Beef mince		1kg		750g
Leg of lamb		1kg		820g
Light leg ham, sliced		1kg		400g
Pork chops, forequarter		1kg		930g
Rump Steak, lean		1kg		650g

Frozen fish, crumbed, baked		425g		520g
Tinned tuna, spring water		425g		300g
Whole frozen chicken		1.5kg		1.2kg
Eggs		600g		500g
Peanut Butter, no added salt		375g		200g
<b><u>Extra Foods</u></b>				
Cake (plain or madeira)		450g		300g
Canola margarine		500g		700g
Canola oil		2litres		350g
Chocolate, milk	Cadburys or Nestle	200g		100g
Cola soft drink	Coca Cola or Pepsi	2litres		1L
Honey		500g		90g
Low fat ice cream, vanilla		2litres		500g
Milo	Nestle	750g		100g
Spicy Fruit Rolls Biscuits	Arnotts	250g		280g
Tea		Pack of 100		63 bags
Vegemite	Kraft	910g		150g
White Sugar		3kg		450g
Coffee, instant	Nescafe	250g		72g

