



**21 September 2008**  
**MEDIA RELEASE**

**More Vegetarian Meals On Aussie Plates Than Ever**  
**National Vegetarian Week 2008 – 29 September – 5 October**

[www.vegetarianweek.com.au](http://www.vegetarianweek.com.au)

Meat is on the way down and vegetarian dishes are increasingly coming into favour according to the results of a new survey showing a major shift in meal preferences, with four out of ten adults saying they are eating more vegetarian meals than they did a couple of years ago.<sup>1</sup>

Despite Australians being renowned carnivores and traditionally one of the highest meat consuming nations in the world, we are increasingly making the switch to a meat-reducing lifestyle according to Newspoll research commissioned by Sanitarium Health Food Company, as younger, educated Australians drive the shift towards plant-based eating.<sup>1</sup>

Of the representative national sample of 1200 adults questioned about their perceptions of traditional meat, meat reducing and vegetarian diets, the majority said that a vegetarian eating plan is the cheapest and best for the environment.<sup>2</sup>

Accredited Practicing Dietitian Trish Guy from Sanitarium's Nutrition Service said these results are heartening and show people are making the connection between a diet low or devoid of meat and a healthy wallet, body and planet. Most have also realised that vegetarian eating is not just for hippies.

"Traditionally, many Australians have had the perception that vegetarian meals are only for people living alternative lifestyles. Now even among those who eat two or less vegetarian meals per week only 14% have this belief, and Australians from all walks of life are regularly incorporating plant-based meals into their diets, with three quarters having at least one vegetarian meal for lunch or dinner a week and 13% having seven or more," said Ms Guy.

"It's encouraging to see that the message is getting through, particularly in a country of meat lovers who have traditionally been resistant to dietary change towards vegetarianism," she said.

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<sup>1</sup> Newspoll survey, "Attitudes towards vegetarian meals", conducted by phone 23-25<sup>th</sup> May 2008. 1,204 respondents aged 18 years and over

<sup>2</sup> Newspoll survey, "Healthy, Wealthy and Wise diet comparison", conducted by phone 11-16<sup>th</sup> July. 1,206 respondents aged 18 years and over

“There are still some people however who have missed the message and are continuing to eat a meat-heavy diet. Not surprisingly, those least likely to make the switch were older Australians. Three quarters of participants eating two or less vegetarian meals a week think that you need meat for essential nutrients, and some were unaware of the environmental upshot of going vegetarian.

“There is still that perception out there that if you cut meat out of your diet you will miss out on vital nutrients such as protein and iron. This is simply not true. There are a wide range of vegetarian options that are not only excellent sources of protein, iron and zinc but are also naturally high in fibre and protective phytonutrients that are unique to plant foods,” said Ms Guy.

“Our heavy meat eaters are still saying that they are scared that if they cut back on meat they will desperately miss the taste. We would encourage people to explore the new tastes and textures that vegetarian meals provide,” she said.

Ms Guy said the upcoming National Vegetarian Week is the perfect opportunity for those big meat eaters who are curious to try some vegetarian meals to see if their taste buds can handle a change.

“By giving vegetarian meals a go, people will be doing their wallet, their health and the environment a big favour. Once people try, they will see just how many delicious, healthy and easy options there are for plant-based eating,” she said.

National Vegetarian Week 2008, sponsored by Sanitarium Health Food Company and supported by the Australian Vegetable and Potato Growers Federation, runs from 29 September to 5 October and features a comparison of traditional meat, meat reducer and vegetarian seven-day meal plans and tasty, contemporary recipes the whole family will love.

For more information go to [www.vegetarianweek.com.au](http://www.vegetarianweek.com.au)

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**About Sanitarium**

Sanitarium’s enduring mission is to inspire and resource our community to experience happy, healthy lives. Commencing operations in Melbourne in 1898 Sanitarium remains proudly 100% Australian owned. Sanitarium is one of Australia’s most trusted brands and has a reputation for producing quality health foods. Weet-Bix is Australia’s No. 1 selling breakfast cereal and So Good, is the leader in the soymilk category.

Sanitarium’s Nutrition Service is a free advisory service for consumers and health professionals. Highly trained nutritionists and dietitians provide friendly, helpful unbiased advice and easy to follow recipes to help people make healthy food choices.

For more information about Sanitarium visit [www.sanitarium.com.au](http://www.sanitarium.com.au) or they can be contacted on 1800 HEALTH