



Julie Browning
Executive Director Communications and Marketing
Retail Food Policy Sub-Committee
Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne
retail.food@rch.org.au

18 June 2009

Dear Julie

Re: Retail food policy for the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne

I am writing to you on behalf of The Parents Jury in response to your question "what types of food should be available for purchase at the new RCH?" We appreciate the opportunity to represent the voice of Australian parents in this important discussion.

The Parents Jury urges the Retail Food Policy Sub-Committee to take a socially responsible approach when deciding what types of food to allow for sale in the expanded retail food area. We suggest that the foods available should be in keeping with the [Australian Guide to Healthy Eating](#) and be selected on the basis of their healthfulness, variety and appeal to children.

Fast food outlets that predominantly sell unhealthy foods should not be allowed to lease retail space within the food area. Fast food is an inappropriate choice for both children and adults, and by allowing its sale within the hospital you would be giving contradictory messages to families regarding the importance of good nutrition in overall health and wellbeing.

We suggest that the retail food area can be made a fun and interesting space for children through the clever use of colour and design including a playground and other interactive features. This will encourage children and parents to spend time in the area and indulge in some healthy foods that will be beneficial to their convalescence.

The Royal Children's Hospital should provide a safe and healthy place for Victorian children and their families. This applies to all facilities within the hospital including the retail food area. The Parents Jury believes that it is imperative that the hospital considers health over profit when deciding the direction of the retail food area.

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The Parents Jury is a web-based network of over 4,000 parents who are interested in the prevention of overweight and obesity and the overall improvement of children's nutrition and physical activity environments.

The Parents Jury is a unique program that fosters and harnesses the views and collective efforts of a large number of parents. We are supported by Diabetes Australia and its member organisations, The Cancer Council Australia and its member organisations, The Australasian Society for the Study of Obesity and VicHealth. These organisations jointly have a strong interest in working together towards healthier food and activity environments for children and turning around the rapidly increasing overweight and obesity levels amongst Australian children.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this submission further.

Yours sincerely,

Justine Hodge
The Parents Jury Manager

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