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VICTORIANS WANT TO CUT THE JUNK AND BOOST FRESH PRODUCE

Victorians want their fresh produce green, cheap and local and are concerned about the impact of junk food ads and marketing in schools and on TV, according new VicHealth research.

The study of 500 Victorians was recently published in the *Health Promotion International* journal.

It reveals overwhelming public support for more farmers' markets, increases in local production of fruit and vegetables, monitoring large supermarket chains to keep prices competitive and creating community fruit and vegetable gardens.

The majority also agreed that governments should subsidise fruit and vegetables in schools.

Opinions on taxing unhealthy food, fruit and vegetable campaigns, growing fresh food on city nature strips and banning food imported fruit and vegetables, varied depending on age, gender, education and income.

Policy	% agree
Clear country of origin labelling on fresh produce	95
Encourage farmers markets	90
Provide resources for increased production of fruit and vegetables in Australia to be consumed locally	90
Monitor the activities of large retailers to ensure fruit and vegetables are competitively priced	90
Keep the cost of fruit and vegetable production as low as possible	88
Spend more money on subsidies to keep the cost of fruit and vegetables down	84
Create more small farms or community gardens in residential areas	80
Provide facilities for growing fruit and vegetables	78
Ban junk food ads during childrens' programs	78
Introduce maximum prices for fruit and vegetables	73
Increased production of fruit and vegetables for export	62
Prohibit schools from selling junk food	56
Banning television advertising of high fat sugar and salt products altogether	52
Ban all imports of fresh foods from overseas	48
Allow nature strips to be used to grow fruit and veg	42
Use a junk food tax to fund healthy eating campaigns	36

The *Australian consumers' views of fruit and vegetable policy options* study was led by VicHealth Research Manager Dr Lisa Thomson and Deakin University Professor of Behavioural Nutrition Tony Worsley.

Prof. Worsley said the finding suggests that many people want governments to intervene when it comes to providing healthy food.

"But many people are quite unsure about the best ways for governments to do this and not everyone is equally enthusiastic about government involvement. For example, people who are interested in the environment and the community tend to be more in favour of government intervention than others," Prof. Worsley said.

VicHealth CEO Todd Harper said the release of the survey results is timely given current threats to the fresh food supply from natural disasters and intense public interest about recommendations in the recent *Labelling Logic* report to the Federal Government.

"Nine out of 10 Victorian adults do not get five serves of vegetables a day and more than half of us don't eat enough fruit. Unhealthy diet can lead to heart disease, gastrointestinal cancer and stroke. That's why this research is so valuable. It will help inform government policies to promote healthy eating and make healthy food more readily available," Mr Harper said.

"The *Preventative Health Taskforce* report to government in 2009 also strongly recommended policies which protect children from junk food marketing - so it's good to see so many people support this move."