



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## WRAPPING FREE LUNCHES HELP SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT

With the start of a new school term drawing closer dietitians are urging parents to ‘think outside the box’ by considering the environment when packing school lunches.

According to the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA), school lunches made from food in its own ‘packaging’, such as fruit and vegetables, will help keep kids healthy and protect the environment.

DAA Spokesperson Megan Alford said: ‘Foods like fruit and vegetables are perfect for lunchboxes as they contain plenty of vitamins and minerals and come without ‘wrapping’ – that’s good for kids and good for the environment.’

Ms Alford encouraged parents to ask children to bring home all waste in their lunchbox. She said parents can then compost or recycle any leftover food waste.

‘If kids can bring home any uneaten food and empty wrappings, it gives parents a chance to monitor what their child has eaten and allows them to recycle packaging and compost food scraps,’ said Ms Alford.

More than \$5 billion worth of food is thrown away by Australians each year<sup>1</sup> - with more than half of that being fresh food, such as fruit and vegetables.

‘To reduce how much food you throw away and to save money, plan lunches in advance and write a shopping list so you buy only what you need to make lunches for the week,’ said Ms Alford, an Accredited Practising Dietitian.

DAA’s top tips for packing a healthy and waste-free lunchbox:

- Use sturdy reusable water bottles
- Pack lunchbox food that comes in its own ‘packaging’ – such as a handful of grapes, an apple or a banana, a small carrot or a boiled egg
- Buy fresh and dried fruit and yoghurt in larger packs or tubs and place individual serves into smaller re-usable containers
- As a family, start a vegetable patch in the back garden, or grow herbs in pots – children are more likely to enjoy eating their own produce.

**For further information or to organise an interview with Megan Alford, contact the Dietitians Association of Australia, on 0409 661 920.**

### **ENDS**

**Note to Editors:** The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is the professional body representing dietitians nationally. Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government, Medicare, the Department of Veterans Affairs and most private health funds as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia. For more information visit [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)

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<sup>1</sup>Hamilton, C., Denniss R, Baker, D. 2005. Wasteful consumption in Australia. The Australia Institute. Available at URL: <https://www.tai.org.au/index.php?q=node%2F19&pubid=77&act=display> Accessed 24/05/10.