

SYDNEY1 DECEMBER 2007

NEW STUDY REVEALS – AUSSIES PURCHASE LESS SUGAR FROM CARBONATED SOFT DRINKS

OVERVIEW:

- New research today from the University of Wollongong has found Australian beverage consumption trends have changed remarkably since 1997.
- The independent research, funded by the Australian Beverages Council, was carried out at the National Centre of Excellence in Functional Foods at the University of Wollongong.
- It examined data from 1997 to 2006 and confirmed that overall, drink sales have increased by 13%, but sugar sweetened soft drink sales have decreased dramatically.
- Australians are instead switching to diet soft drinks and water options.

STATEMENT BY TONY GENTILE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE AUSTRALIAN BEVERAGES COUNCIL:

“The University of Wollongong study is extremely important for several reasons, not only is it one of the few examples where industry is working together with health professionals to provide up-to-date, relevant data about Australian health and habits, but it has also demonstrated a dramatic shift in Australian drinking habits.” said Chief Executive of the Australian Beverages Council, Tony Gentile.

“The Australian beverage industry is not surprised by the University of Wollongong findings. We have known for a while now that Australian habits have been changing for the better – it’s largely due to the industry’s commitment to assist governments and the community to improve choice, education and awareness of health and wellbeing amongst Australians. We’ve been focused upon this for a long time now.

“Together with other relevant parties, the Australian beverage industry has been developing and implementing initiatives to address today’s complex public health issues.” said Mr Gentile.

“The industry has increased the number of new beverage options with low or no-calorie content and light versions of existing beverages. We’ve also increased the choice and availability of individual packaging sizes, and labelling initiatives to help Australians make an informed choice. We’re committed to not advertising or marketing to children under 12 years of age, and we’re committed to marketing our beverages responsibly, to encourage moderate consumption.

“We’re also committed to working with public and private organisations to continue to conduct research, just like the University of Wollongong findings, to further assist to encourage healthy lifestyles for Australians.” said Mr Gentile.

The last research into Australian beverage consumption trends was the National Nutrition Survey in 1995 - more than a decade ago. According to Mr Gentile, this study is one of the few examples of industry working with researchers to produce fresh, relevant and up to date information to benefit public health initiatives.

“Obesity is a complex issue, and studies that provide up-to-date analyses of Australian trends can only assist to provide targeted and effective solutions,” said Mr Gentile.

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