



MEDIA RELEASE

To:	The Gladstone Observer
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RE:	Healthy Active Gladstone Region Healthy Choice Awards
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Healthy Choice Awards: The Key Ingredient to a Healthier Community

No matter your age, young or old, good nutrition is a key ingredient to a healthy lifestyle in a world that is plagued evermore by obesity and health-related issues like heart disease, cancer and diabetes. People tend to make excuses for their poor nutrition. People's lives are busier; the two-income household can mean that neither partner has the time or energy to cook every night. There are also more people living alone, who often don't want to cook for themselves. Poor nutrition puts a huge burden on individuals, families and the entire community which is exactly why the Healthy Active Gladstone Region has adopted the Healthy Choice Awards.

The Healthy Choice Awards aim to build social support for food premises by providing them with knowledge and motivation to serve and promote healthy food choices.

"The Healthy Choice Awards will give places like the local bistros, cafes, clubs, take-away shops and restaurants new found encouragement and support to provide healthier menus and meals to their customers." explains Nicole Starkey, Community Nutritionist. "Furthermore, the awards will lead the way toward excellence in the fields of both nutrition and affordability."

All food premises are openly invited and strongly encouraged to participate in the Healthy Choice Awards. Participating locations are obliged to achieve the standards for the Award in the two areas of providing healthy, affordable food options along with promoting healthy food selections. "Not every dish served by partaking outlets needs to be healthy to apply for the award." commented Starkey. "The award focuses on finding those places that commit to using healthier alternatives in their recipes thus allowing customers healthier choices from the menu."

The option to become part of the Healthy Choice Awards is the smart, healthy choice for your business and for the community as a whole. Food premises that add healthier selections to their menus will be fulfilling the growing demand by consumers for healthier choices and recognised for their improvements along with those businesses that already offer healthy food on their menus. When businesses apply and are successful they will receive an award and be able to display it with pride.

"The implementation of the Healthy Choice Awards will hopefully lead to customers keeping an eye out for the sign of healthy eating choices when they dine in and out around the region and food premise owners and workers feeling proud and confident in their contributions to healthier eating habits and lifestyles," said Starkey.

Healthy Active Gladstone Region would like to open the invitation to all food premises from cafes to caterers, fish n chip shops to pizza outlets – the more the better. The awards have three stages to go through: self assessment, assessment visit and confirmation.

For more information or to get involved contact Nicole Starkey on 07 4976 3106 or nicole_starkey@health.qld.gov.au

Healthy eating habits will ensure that you get enough of the nutrients essential for good health and well-being. It will also reduce the risk of health problems in later life such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. The Healthy Choice Awards will educate participants along the way, teaching them to use healthier food choices and cooking in their services, influencing owners, workers and customers around the community. With the help and dedication of contributing food premises combined with the knowledge of customers to choose healthier ways, the community can work on making health and nutrition issues a problem of the past.