



MEDIA RELEASE

McDonald's NZ commits to improving menu nutrition and choice

- **Extensive customer research informs priorities in nutritional improvement programme that will see further reductions in sugar, saturated fat and sodium**
- **New technology, kitchen developments and additions to menu will also allow increased choice and flexibility for customers**

McDonald's New Zealand has announced today a multi-million dollar investment programme to deliver nutritional improvement across its menu and increased choice and flexibility for customers.

As part of the company's *Journey For Good* corporate responsibility framework, McDonald's carried out extensive research with New Zealanders, asking them what changes they would like to see in the menu. Further reductions in the levels of saturated fat, sugar and sodium across food and beverages were amongst the top ranking priorities. McDonald's has also spent over a year consulting with subject matter experts regarding its role in improving New Zealanders' meal choices.

"While fundamentally we sell burgers and fries, the McDonald's of 20 years ago is very different to the McDonald's of today and the future," explains Patrick Wilson, managing director, McDonald's New Zealand. "We are a modern and progressive burger company. We listen to our customers, as well as those who form opinion and policy, and we continue to change and show leadership, particularly when it comes to the food and drinks we offer."

"We recently announced our move to free range for all our fresh eggs. In the last few years we have significantly reduced the levels of sodium in our cheese and fries. Before that we reduced saturated fat by moving to a sunflower and canola based cooking oil.

"Over the last few years sugar has increasingly come under the spotlight and we have looked at how we can make further reductions in sugar. When we look at our menu, the reduction of sugar consumed in our hot and cold drinks is an area of opportunity, but it has to be done in a way that works for our customers.

"In 2014 we trialled a variety of different options with our drinks. These included offering a 'zero' sugar drink as the default in combos, showing a range of options on menu boards, and offering the opportunity for customers to swap their soft drink for bottled water for no extra cost.

"The trial ran for 20 weeks across 50 restaurants, over which time around six million people passed through those restaurants. This real world data has given us a very clear view of what works in the short term and what initiatives need to be worked on over time.

"Our research clearly tells us that New Zealanders do not want to be told what to drink, or have options taken away. It's important to offer a range of genuine choices, reformulate products without impacting quality and taste, and ensure pricing delivers value to the customer.

"We've already acted on a number of the research findings. We now offer the option of a 600ml bottle of water instead of a soft drink in combos for no extra cost. It is priced at two dollars on the normal menu, therefore offering good value. We have also transitioned to a new version of apple and blackcurrant drink, which is thirty percent lower in sugar and calories and uses natural flavours and colours.

“We have set ourselves a five year plan to reduce sugar consumed in our menu, and we will share progress and commitments as we move forward.

“Alongside the investment in further improving our menu for customers, collectively McDonald’s restaurants will be investing over \$15 million in new technology and equipment in their restaurants. By the end of the first quarter of 2016 the majority of our restaurants will feature digital touch screen ordering kiosks, and the Create Your Taste option will be in more than half our restaurants. This enables our customers even more flexibility in what they order, and more high quality, real and fresh ingredients.

“Create Your Taste also enables us to bring new and exciting offerings. As an example, at our Greenlane concept restaurant customers can choose vegetarian and gluten free options, amongst a host of new choices. Customers tell us they want McDonald’s New Zealand to continue to show leadership, and to grow and evolve with their changing tastes and priorities. We will continue to listen to what people ask of us, and you can expect to see more examples of McDonald’s doing the right things as a business in New Zealand, concludes Wilson.”

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About McDonald’s New Zealand

New Zealand’s first McDonald’s restaurant opened in Porirua in 1976. Today there are 167 McDonald’s restaurants across New Zealand, 80 per cent of which are owned and operated by local business men and women. The organisation employs over 9,000 people in restaurants nationwide, and is one of New Zealand’s largest employers of youth. McDonald’s was awarded ‘retail employer of the year’ in 2011 by Retailworld. In 2014 McDonald’s spent around \$183 million with local suppliers, while New Zealand producers exported over \$312 million of food to other McDonald’s markets. McDonald’s is the primary supporter of Ronald McDonald House Charities in New Zealand, which provides accommodation for the families of seriously ill children and other services including mobile dental care units. For more information visit www.mcdonalds.co.nz

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