

4 May 2022

Dear Principal,

## Helping Queensland kids bounce back with healthy schools

The Queensland Association of School Tuckshops (QAST) is a not-for-profit membership association working with Queensland school communities to build capacity in tuckshops and improve health outcomes for children.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all facets of daily life, including health behaviours. Reports show an increase in the intake of junk and snack foods, increased screen time, and weight gain for many. As we recover from the turmoil of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has never been a more vital time for our schools to be places of health and wellbeing for our children, supporting families in their efforts to stay healthy in uncertain times.

The Department of Education's *Smart Choices - Healthy food and drink supply Strategy for Queensland Schools* is a whole of school healthy food supply strategy for Queensland schools. The goals of this strategy are reflected in the Department of Education's *Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework* which is about creating safe, supportive and inclusive environments, including providing environments that promote healthy lifestyle choices. Whilst Smart Choices is mandatory in Queensland state schools, is it suggested as good practice for all schools.

Similar policies and strategies exist in almost all jurisdictions in Australia because learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked, and school settings have repeatedly been identified as essential in setting up lifelong healthy habits in children.

QAST has partnered with Health and Wellbeing Queensland and is committed to improving the quality of food and drinks provided in schools. We, together with our partners P&C's Qld, Catholic School Parents Queensland, the Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network, NAQ Nutrition, Cancer Council Qld and the Heart Foundation, want to remind schools of the benefits of implementing *Smart Choices*. QAST membership can help school P&C's and tuckshops to implement the policy whilst remaining or becoming commercially viable.

Your school will soon receive postal correspondence about QAST membership so please watch out for this. I welcome the opportunity to discuss any further questions so feel free to contact me on 0431 302 237 or [chris@qast.org.au](mailto:chris@qast.org.au).

Yours sincerely

Chris Ogden  
Executive Services Manager  
QAST