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Media release

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Australian Open serves first with the Tick

Healthy feasts will no longer be confined to the court at the 2008 Australian Open with Melbourne Park becoming the first major sports stadium to offer genuinely healthier food choices with the Heart Foundation Tick from 15 January 2008.

More than half a million Australians attending the Open will now be able to choose Tick approved meals - two salads and three sandwiches – at the new Food Store RLA outlet run by caterers Delaware North in Rod Laver Arena.

Ms Susan Anderson, Food Supply Strategy Director, Heart Foundation said the Australian Open is responding to the demands of almost 80% of Australians who want the Tick to guide them to healthier options at sporting venues.

“As a sports crazed nation, it’s important that fans can finally access genuinely healthier foods at sports stadiums. Our research continues to tell us that people want healthier choices whenever they’re eating out,” she added.

Tick approval of food produced by caterers on the scale of the Australian Open is incredibly complex because each item is prepared individually yet must always meet the Heart Foundation’s strict nutrition standards every time.

“Delaware North, the company responsible for hospitality and catering at Melbourne Park, has successfully combined fresh ingredients to produce tasty offerings that also meet all the Heart Foundation nutritional requirements. This makes them the first caterer to earn the Tick,” said Ms Anderson.

The Heart Foundation measures a healthier meal by its overall nutritional value; not just one element, making Tick approved meals genuinely healthier choices.

“Fresh ingredients are great, but the health benefit is lost when the overall sandwich is loaded with salt and claims of ‘low fat’ are irrelevant when the size of the meal still blows out kilojoules,” said Ms Anderson.

If you’re one of the lucky ones attending the Australian Open, the Heart Foundation encourages you to try one of the Tick choices.

“If you were to swap a ham, cheese and tomato baguette for a Tick approved Tuna and salad on rye you’ll have a sandwich which has 86% less saturated fat, around 60% less salt and importantly, is an excellent source of fibre”.

Maria Kucherhan, Director of Marketing & Strategic Growth for Delaware North said that the decision to offer Tick approved food was based on consumer and client research.

“The demand is growing among consumers for healthier foods to be offered wherever we cater, including major sport and entertainment venues, and our clients are beginning to ask us to cater to this demand.

“We anticipate that over the next few years more people will ask for more diverse food, including healthy, organic and lighter foods, and we believe an ideal starting point is the Heart Foundation Tick.

Ms Anderson said Delaware North’s commitment to healthier choices is proof that meeting Tick’s tough standards is possible even for large scale caterers.

“We call on other caterers and food outlets to take up the Tick challenge to provide guaranteed healthier choices for their customers,” she added

The Tick approved food will also be offered at Food Store RLA for other events held in Melbourne Park’s Rod Laver Arena during 2008.

ENDS

Tick approved items available at Melbourne Park’s newest food offering, Food Store RLA are:

Chicken and chick pea salad with coriander and lime
Roasted pumpkin, sweet potato and carrot salad with cashews
Hummus and salad on wholemeal Lebanese bread
Chicken, mayo and rocket on Country Grain Organic Rye
Tuna and vegie mix, spinach and carrot on Country Grain Organic Rye

For more information visit: www.heartfoundation.org.au
Or call: **1 300 36 27 87** for the cost of a local call.

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW

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Heart Foundation**

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