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Greek fruitener Con says: 'Eat more fruit'

ICONIC Greek fruiterer, Con Dikaletis, has embarked on a mission to encourage people to eat more fruit, especially "dribbilicious, bewdiful" stone fruit, this summer.



Bewdiful mind: Con the Fruiterer is urging people to eat more fresh fruit, particularly stone fruit, this summer.

Horrified by new research showing 39 per cent of Australians are eating less than the recommended two serves of fresh, dried, frozen or juiced fruit a day, Con the Fruiterer - aka comedian Mark Mitchell - last week began his crusade in a Melbourne shopping centre where he handed out samples and did a cooking demonstration, accompanied by a television crew.

Commissioned by Horticulture Australia Ltd, the Newspoll survey of 1200 adults last month found just half were eating two serves of fresh fruit.

The survey found only 45 per cent of men and 41 per cent of 18 to 34 year olds were getting their two serves.

Mr Mitchell told The Weekly Times an education campaign was badly needed to remind people of the "bleedin' obvious" - that fresh fruit was cheaper and more healthy than sugary, processed products that claimed to be fruit-based.

"People have been beguiled by multi-million dollar advertising campaigns into thinking that something that's fruit derived is as good as the real thing and patently it's not," he said.

"There's millions of dollars being spent promoting crap ... (fruit) is just hanging

on trees.

"It's there in the fruiterer's and you can't do better than that."

Mr Mitchell said consumers also needed to be educated about how to choose and store stone fruit.

"People don't understand, especially with nectarines, that the more speckled and leathery looking the skin is the better the fruit is," he said.

"It has more depth of flavour and you can't get that from a fruit strap, however many Olympians promote Uncle Toby's."

Mr Mitchell said he was

pleased by the level of recognition and general goodwill towards his character, Con the Fruiterer, even though it is more than 20 years since he was introduced to Australian television audiences.

Con himself said Australian peaches, nectarines, plums and apricots were at their "supreme peak" right now and should be gobbled up.

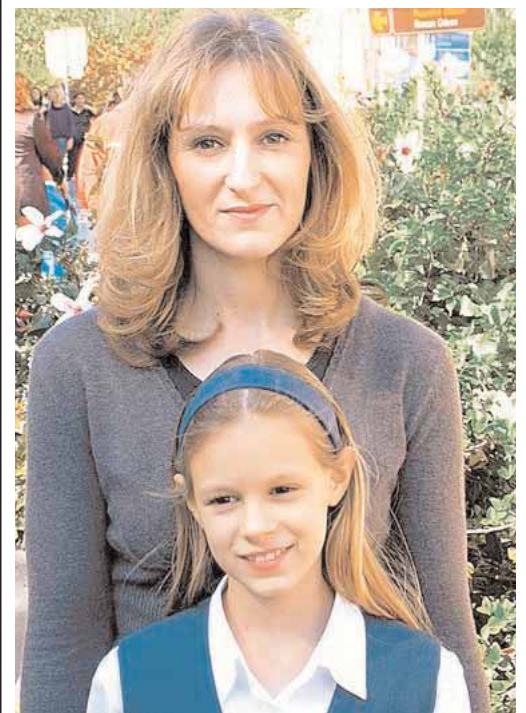
"We have some of the world's sweetest, juiciest, unbelievably bewdiful summer stone fruit thanks to our warm weather, so go crazy and get stuck in while it's fresh in-store for you," Mr Mitchell said.

"I say to my bewdiful wife Marika, who is the whole world to me - well she's the same shape - and my six daughters Roula, Toula, Soula, Voula, Foula and Agape, plus the two little gentlemen, Nic and Ric, we is so lucky we live the good life.

"We can eat as many plums, apricots, nectarines and peaches as we like because I own the shop.

"But for other Aussies, I worry they is not getting enough."

Con will appear in selected supermarkets and greengrocers in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne in early February.



Expat petitions for education overhaul

AMID THE growing debate over how to reform the public education system, a British mother on the island of Kos has launched a nationwide online petition asking for an immediate overhaul.

"I started the petition just over two weeks ago, and already more than 200 parents and students from around the country have signed up," said Alison Carne, originally from London. "Something needs to be done. The current situation is causing a lot of stress on families."

The biggest problem, according to Carne, is that lessons are not fully explained during class, forcing children to spend hours trying to learn the material at home. Her 10-year-old daughter has more than four hours of homework each night, she said.

"The school system has become so hard that I and many others cannot cope with it any more," she said. "Our children are not being taught properly and therefore receive hours of homework every day. It has come to the point now that if parents cannot afford to send their children to private lessons, which cost hundreds of euros a month, they are forced to study with their children every day or risk them falling behind and repeating a year."

Carne hopes to collect thousands of signatures.

"As soon as we get enough members I plan to send the petition to the education minister and say, look, thousands of people in the country are upset with the system and, quite frankly, can't afford to pay for private lessons any more."

Formula for fun

SOLAR-powered model cars were some of the scientific projects on display at Nuwarra Public School's recent science fair. The years 5 and 6 students also made rockets and volcanoes, which were on display for the rest of the school to see. Nuwarra teacher Trevor Lambert said the projects were the culmination of the students' study of electricity and scientific processes.



Nuwarra Public School students Theo Glinatsis, 12, and Nicole Morley, 11, display a solar-powered car at the school's science fair.

"I was amazed at the variety and depth of detail which some of them put into it," Mr Lambert said. "The science fair was a good opportunity for the younger kids at school to see what the senior kids are capable of". "It gave the kids who displayed their work a chance to field questions from the younger kids".

Mr Lambert said the years 5 and 6 students learned about making the projects during their science unit about experimentation.

He said they all chose and build their own projects.

"After discussing it in class, the kids were given an assignment and we encouraged them to get their parents to help them at home", he said.

"They chose something where they could demonstrate a scientific principle".

Mr Lambert said the school hoped to hold another science fair next year.

Article from the Leader