

INFORMAS Food Prices

Does healthy food cost more?

The challenges of measuring the price of
'healthy' versus current 'less healthy'
foods and diets.

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INFORMAS monitoring framework

ORGANISATIONS	PROCESSES	Public sector policies and actions				Private sector policies and actions		
		How much progress have (international, national, state and local) governments made towards good practice in improving food environments and implementing obesity/NCDs prevention policies and actions? <i>(University of Auckland)</i>				How are private sector organisations affecting food environments and influencing obesity/NCDs prevention efforts? <i>(Deakin University & City University)</i>		
FOOD ENVIRONMENTS	IMPACTS	Food composition	Food labelling	Food marketing	Food provision	Food retail	Food prices	Food trade & investment
		What is the nutrient composition (particularly fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt content) of common packaged foods? <i>(The George Institute)</i>	What labelling (including nutrition info & claims) is present on packaged foods and on menus in quick-service restaurants? <i>(University of Oxford)</i>	What is the level of exposure (of different population groups) to the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages? <i>(University of Wollongong)</i>	What foods are provided in different settings (eg. schools, hospitals, workplaces)? <i>(University of Toronto)</i>	What foods are available in different settings (eg. supermarkets, communities)? <i>(University of Auckland)</i>	What is the relative price and affordability of ‘current’ vs ‘healthy’ diets, meals & foods? <i>(Queensland University of Technology & University of Auckland)</i>	What are the risks and benefits to healthy food environments and diets from trade agreements? <i>(Australian National University)</i>
POPULATIONS	OUTCOMES	Population diet		Physiological & metabolic risk factors		Health outcomes		
		What is the quality and quantity of (different population’s) diet? <i>(University of Sao Paulo)</i>		What are obesity and other risk factor burdens? <i>(WHO)</i>		What are NCD morbidity and mortality burdens? <i>(WHO)</i>		

You've increased
your prices again!
why?!

Take your
pick.

CASH

TODAY'S PRICE
INCREASE IS
BROUGHT TO
YOU BY:

- GLOBAL WARMING
- OIL PRICES
- OZONE LAYER
- LABOUR COSTS
- FALLING STOCKS
- SUBPRIME MORTGAGES
- WHEAT PRICES
- COFFEE PRICES
- GOLD
- TERRORIST THREAT
- CHINA
- Strong dollar
- Just because

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Rodgers

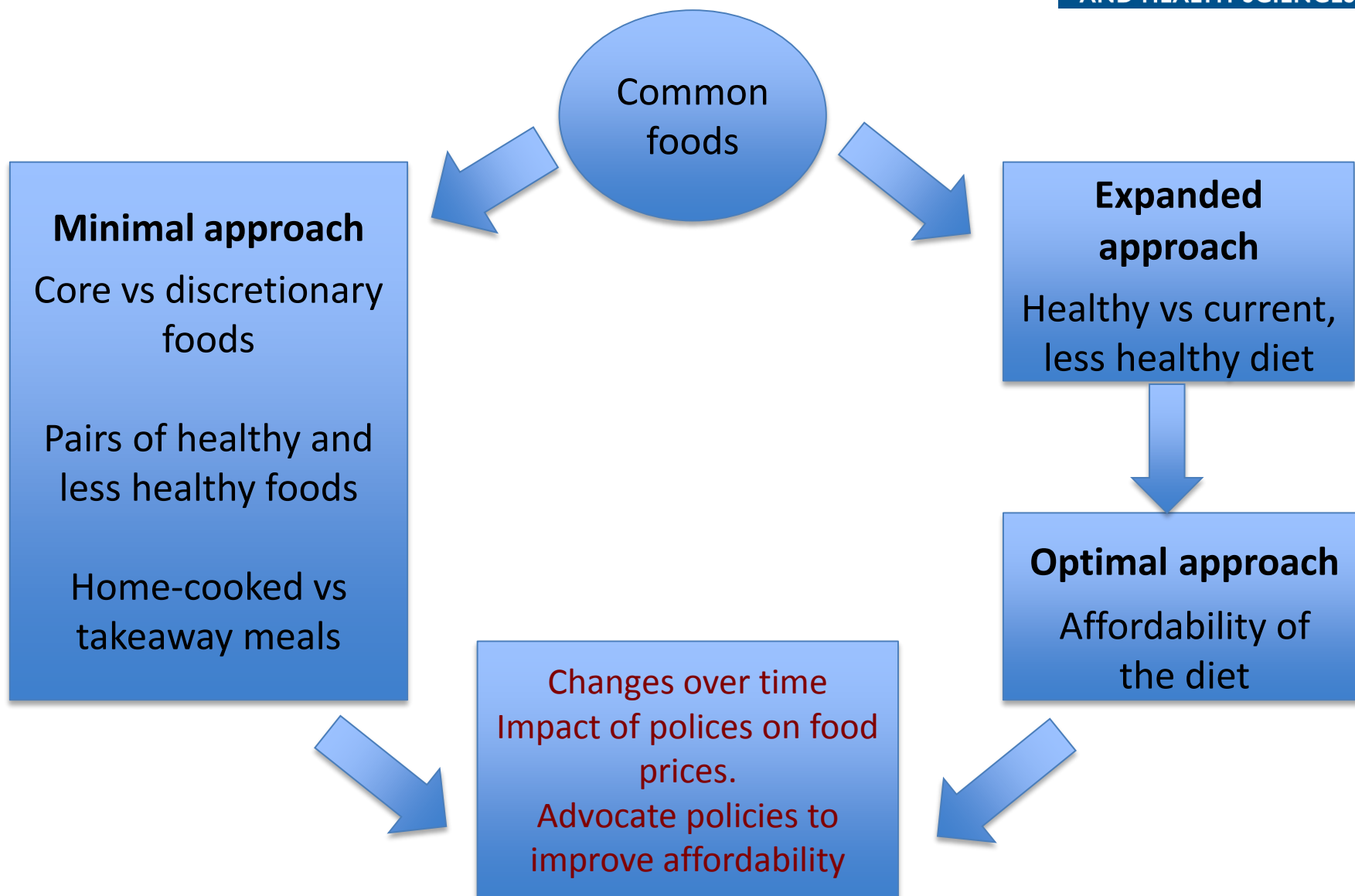
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Does healthy food cost more?

- Foods or diets?
- What is a healthy diet?
- What is an acceptable diet?
- What is the current diet?
- How do you measure the difference in cost?

Research Objectives

- Develop standardised methods to:
 - construct lists of *healthy* and *less healthy* foods & meals
 - construct *healthy* and *current, less healthy* diets
 - assess affordability of diets
- Test protocol in NZ, Fiji, Australia
- Compare price differential and affordability between countries



What are commonly consumed foods?

- 🌶️ Food Price Index / Household expenditure survey
- 🌶️ National Nutrition Survey
- 🌶️ Food lists used in studies
- 🌶️ Food-based dietary guidelines (healthy lists)
- 🌶️ Local knowledge
- 🌶️ Market research

Minimal Approach Food Lists

Pairs of foods

 Contrast in saturated fat, salt, sugar or fibre

wholemeal bread: white bread

Core and discretionary lists (cost over time)

 Core: items in food-based dietary guidelines

apple, milk

 Discretionary: items high in saturated fat, sugar and salt

sausage, potato crisps

Meals

 Home-cooked vs takeaway

Fried chicken & chips: roast chicken & vegetables

Price Metrics

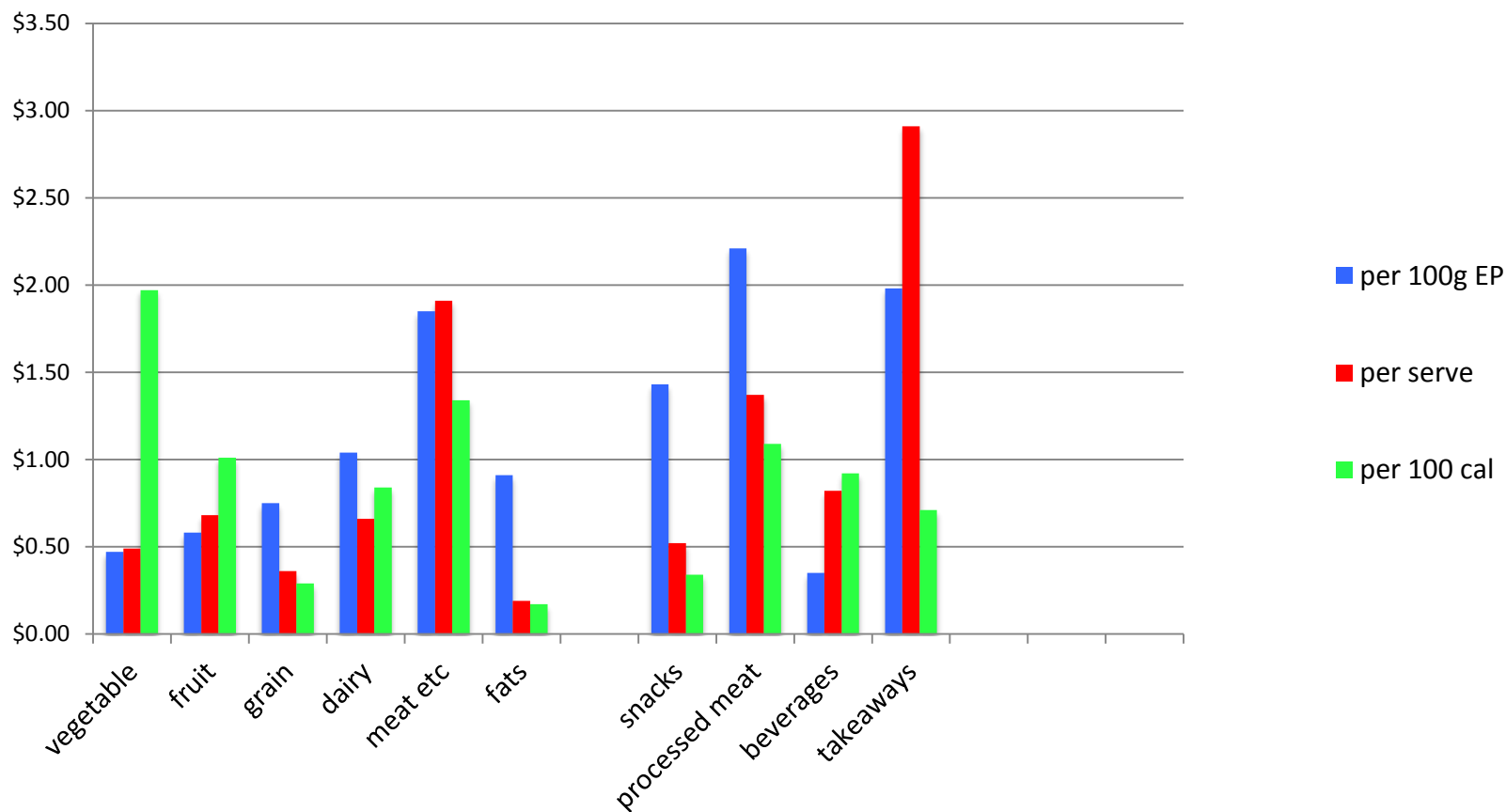
\$ per 100g

\$ per serve

\$ per calorie

Core vs Discretionary

Average price per item



Challenges Minimal Approach

- 🍊 What are commonly consumed foods?
- 🍊 Missing food groups (pairs)
- 🍊 Having realistic pairs
- 🍊 Categorising foods as healthy and less healthy
- 🍊 Which price metric?
- 🍊 Including takeaways

Expanded Approach

Healthy diet _{vs} current, less healthy diet

- Measure the cost of the diet
- Covers all food groups
- Realistic food choices

Diets: Systematic Review

Food based dietary patterns:

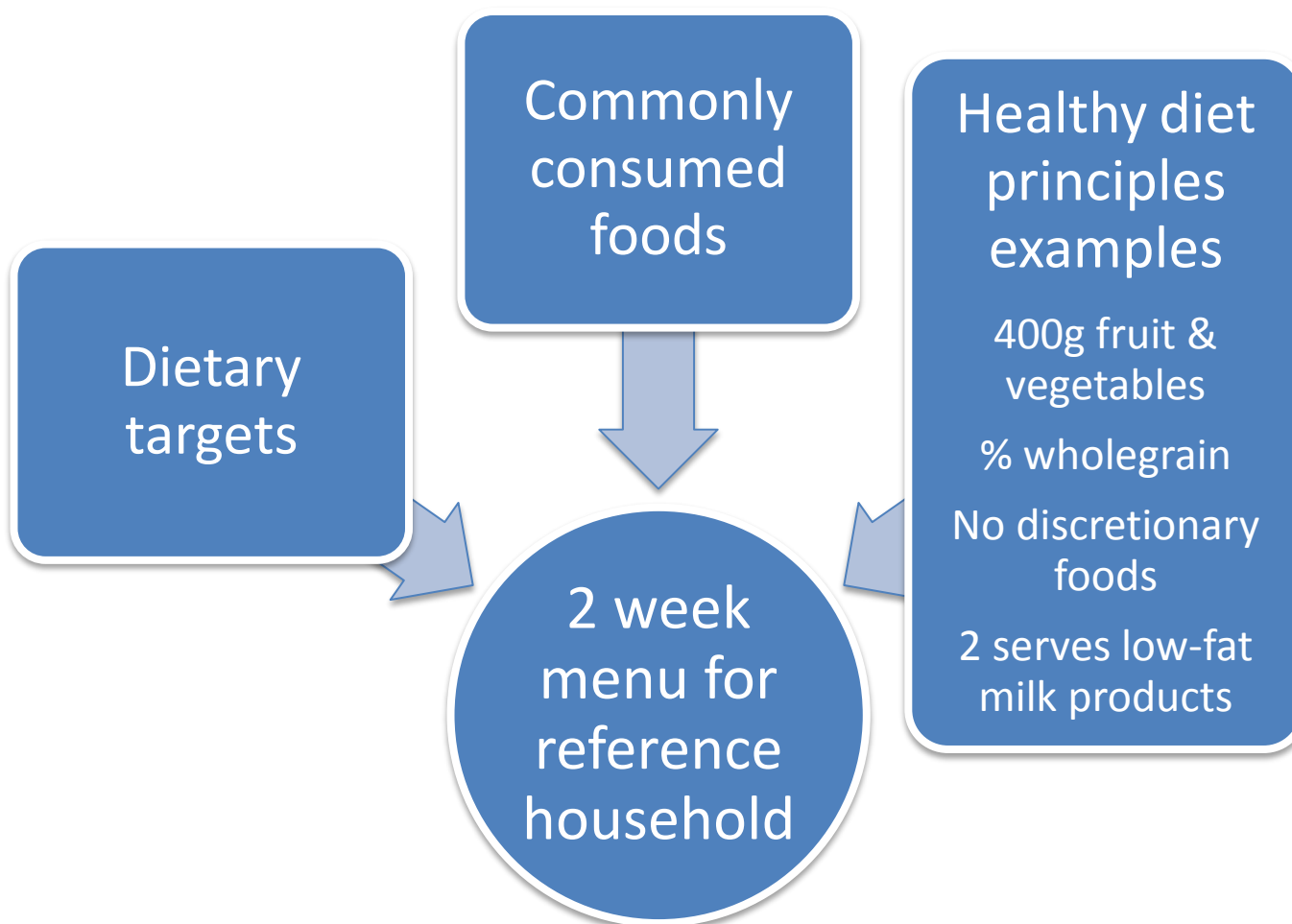
Healthy diets: + \$1.48 per day
+ \$1.54 per 2000kcal

Nutrient based dietary patterns:

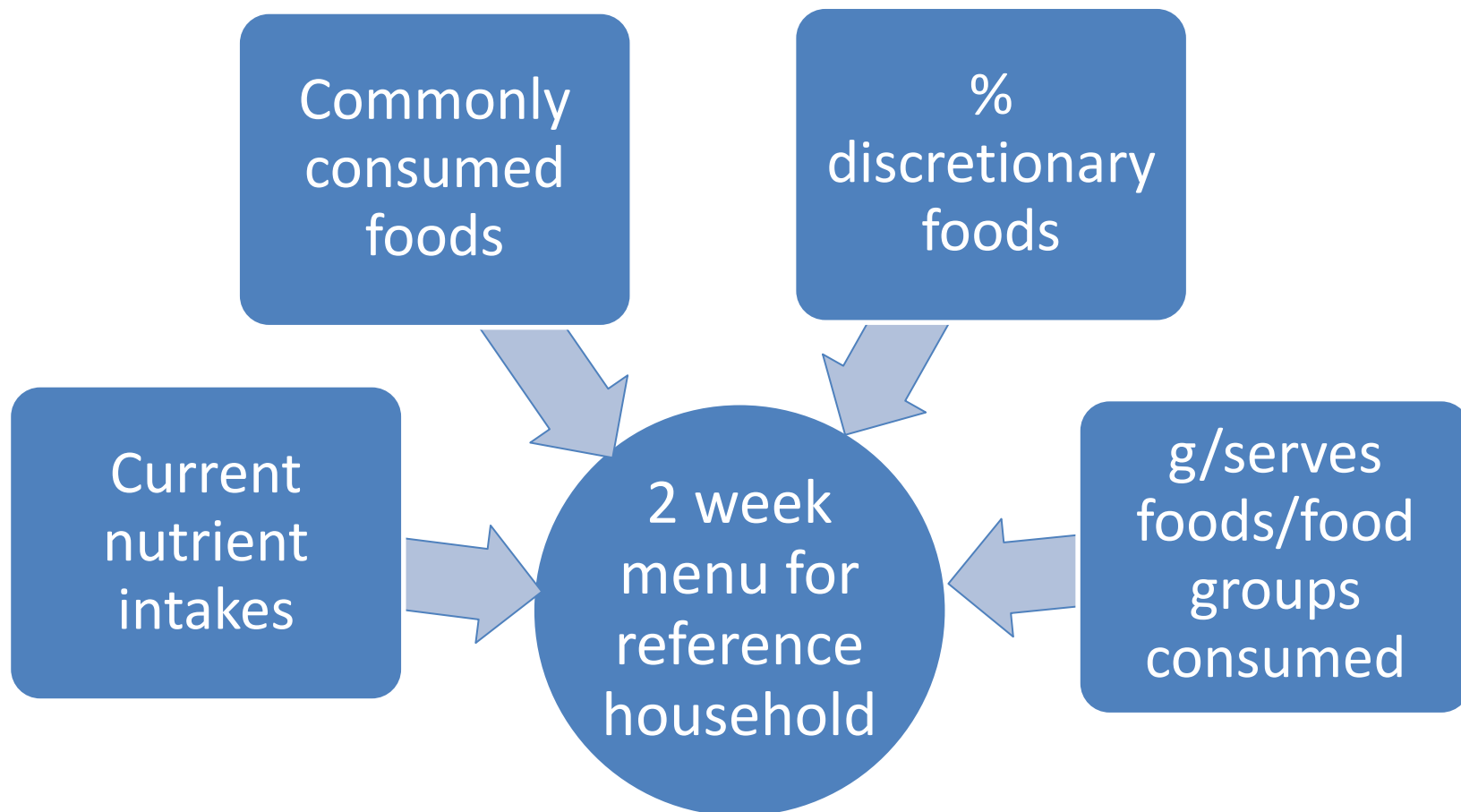
Healthy diets: + \$0.04 per day (NS)
+ \$1.56 per 2000kcal

Rao M et al 2013 Do healthier foods and diet patterns cost more than less healthy options? A systematic review and meta-analysis. BMJ

Healthy Diet



Current, less healthy diet



Challenges – Expanded Approach

- 🍎 What are commonly consumed foods?
- 🍎 Lack of nutrition survey data to identify current intake (grams of foods).
- 🍎 Defining a healthy diet
- 🍎 Range of possible menus
- 🍎 Representative basket of the population
- 🍎 Should alcohol or takeaways be included?
- 🍎 Other costs: time to prepare food, cooking equipment, transport
- 🍎 Wastage

Sampling Protocol

Develop
shopping list

Package size
Brand
names/home
brands
Discounts

Collect prices
Supermarkets
Fruit &
Vegetable
retail outlets
Time of year

Optimal Approach

Affordability of diet compared to
disposable median household income

Next Steps

PhD Research

- Test protocol in Australia, Fiji, NZ

INFORMAS 2016

- Maori and Pacific baskets
- NZ retail environment study collecting food prices and measuring shelf space healthy and less healthy food