

THE SKINNY ON AUSSIE WOMEN!

In a recent survey of more than 5,000 Australian women about their weight, shape and appearance, Fernwood Women's Health Clubs found 1,663 (33%) women to be overweight, 1,421 (28.4%) obese, and 928 (18.5%) morbidly obese.

In a bid to help Australian women establish a healthier and happier life, Fernwood Women's Health Clubs did a national calling for 50 women to join its *Get Gorgeous Countdown* and had more than 5,000 women enter online and complete the survey, with the results indicating;

- *An average clothing size of participants to be 14-16 - with 1,250 claiming to be a size 14, 1,169 a size 16 and 1,801 a size 18 and above.*
- *Normal to overweight participants ideal clothing size was identified as a size 12, whilst those classified as obese or morbid would prefer to be a size 14.*
- *90% of the women surveyed believed they were overweight, however results show that perceptions of weight are overestimated amongst all age groups with many who are within the normal weight range believing themselves to be overweight.*
- *More than 80% of participants indicated that they felt they were constantly battling with their weight for a number of reasons including; pregnancy/childbirth 1,711 (12%), a hectic family life 1,351 (9.5%), a busy career 1,603 (11.3%), being unmotivated to exercise 3,332 (23.5%), overindulging in snacks/take-away foods 3,051 (21.5%), being intimidated to exercise in public 1,878 (13.2%), and other reasons 1,274 (9%).*
- *3,031 (64.3%) women indicated they were unhappy with their overall physical appearance, whilst 1,403 (29.8%) felt depressed by their appearance.*
- *2,866 women said other people (husbands, boyfriends, mothers, friends, children, shop assistants, and in-laws) made negative comments about their weight with these comments affecting how they felt about themselves.*
- *2,591 (45%) women believed they're treated differently by society because of their weight. The women indicated that simply going about one's normal day to day activities was stressful with one major issue being purchasing clothes - as they felt shop assistants to be rude, impatient and discourteous due to their size.*

- *The main areas of the women's lives affected by their weight included personal issues such as grooming 3,413 (38%), dating and intimacy 1,907 (21.2%), socialising / spending time with friends 1,713 (19.1%), being able to enjoy an active family life 1,455 (16.2%), and not being respected by colleagues 494 (5.5%).*
- *More than 77% of the women indicated that they dieted. A total of 1,025 (11.8%) having tried Jenny Craig - 2,533 (29.3%) Weight Watchers - 742 (8.6%) Lite n'Easy - 859 (10%) Aitkens - 492 (5.7%) CSIRO - 614 (7%) Sure Slim - and 2,388 (27.6%) other types of diets. Feedback from the women indicated that whilst on occasion the diet had been successful in assisting with weight loss, lack of motivation or regaining weight once the diet finished were major problems. Many went on to put on more weight than they had originally carried!*

According to Diana Williams, Fernwood founder and 2005 Telstra Businesswoman of the Year, our increasingly busy lifestyles and unhealthy food choices are no doubt major contributing factors to weight gain in Australian women.

“Many of our new members often say that due to a busy lifestyle of trying to juggle family commitments and/or a successful career, their diets aren't as healthy as they could be with many resorting to purchasing foods away from the home that are higher in fat, sugar and total kilojoules. We've also noticed many of our members have participated in fad diets in the past which causes body weight to yo-yo and the metabolism to slow.”

Fernwood's *Get Gorgeous Countdown*, currently taking place across VIC, NSW, ACT, SA and QLD is aimed at helping the 50 women to improve body image, self-esteem as well as reductions in weight and body measurements, whilst also coaching them on healthy food and exercise habits they can continue to incorporate into their daily lives on an ongoing basis.

Fernwood Women's Health Clubs was established in 1989 as a single club in Bendigo, Victoria. Today, with 70 health clubs across Australia, Fernwood is the largest women's only health club in Australia, with more than 80,000 members, 2,275 employees, and an annual turnover in excess of \$75 million.

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For further information including a detailed analysis of the statistics or age range, or interviews with the participants, please contact:

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