

# PROJECT PROOF BY FIFTYFIVE5

## Consumer research funded through the Mushroom Industry Marketing levy

In realigning their approach to mushroom marketing, Hort Innovation has committed to strong collaboration with the Mushroom Industry Strategic Investment Advisory Panel (SIAP). This will ensure that any decisions regarding mushroom messaging are data-driven, rather than being based on opinion or hearsay. The objective is to drive demand for mushrooms through increasing consumer knowledge, attitudes and purchase intent.

Following extensive consultation with the SIAP, and their desire to learn more about the interest consumers had in the health benefits of mushrooms, Hort Innovation engaged consumer research specialist agency fiftyfive5 to investigate the consumer decisions behind purchasing mushrooms.

Specifically, the research by fiftyfive5 sought to tease out the reasons consumers purchase or don't purchase mushrooms, the importance of health in those purchase decisions, and what health claims are most likely to resonate and lead to increased purchase.

Surveys were conducted online during November 2021, with a nationally representative sample of Australians.

Two different surveys were conducted: A "Market Sizing" sample, with 796 participants, and a "Deep Dive" sample representative of those who had purchased mushrooms within the previous six months.

### Key results included:

- Two thirds of Australians bought mushrooms within the last six months; more than half of the remainder had never purchased mushrooms.
- Taste and texture were key barriers for those who had either never purchased mushrooms or stopped purchasing them.
- Price, awareness and 'the kids don't like them' were also key barriers to purchase.
- People who do buy mushrooms generally plan to get them each week.
- Taste, habit, and value are key reasons to buy mushrooms; only 24% of people nominated health reasons as a driver for purchase.
- Even though health is a secondary reason, nearly all purchasers already know that mushrooms are good for them.



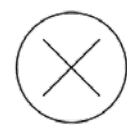
**MUSHROOMS L6M  
PURCHASERS**

**69%**



**MUSHROOMS LAPSED  
PURCHASERS**

**11%**

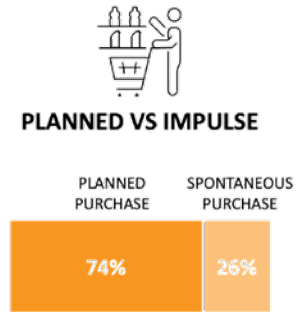
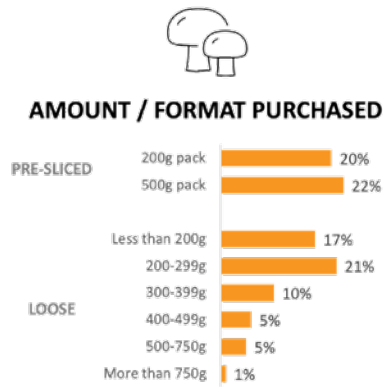


**NEVER PURCHASED  
MUSHROOMS**

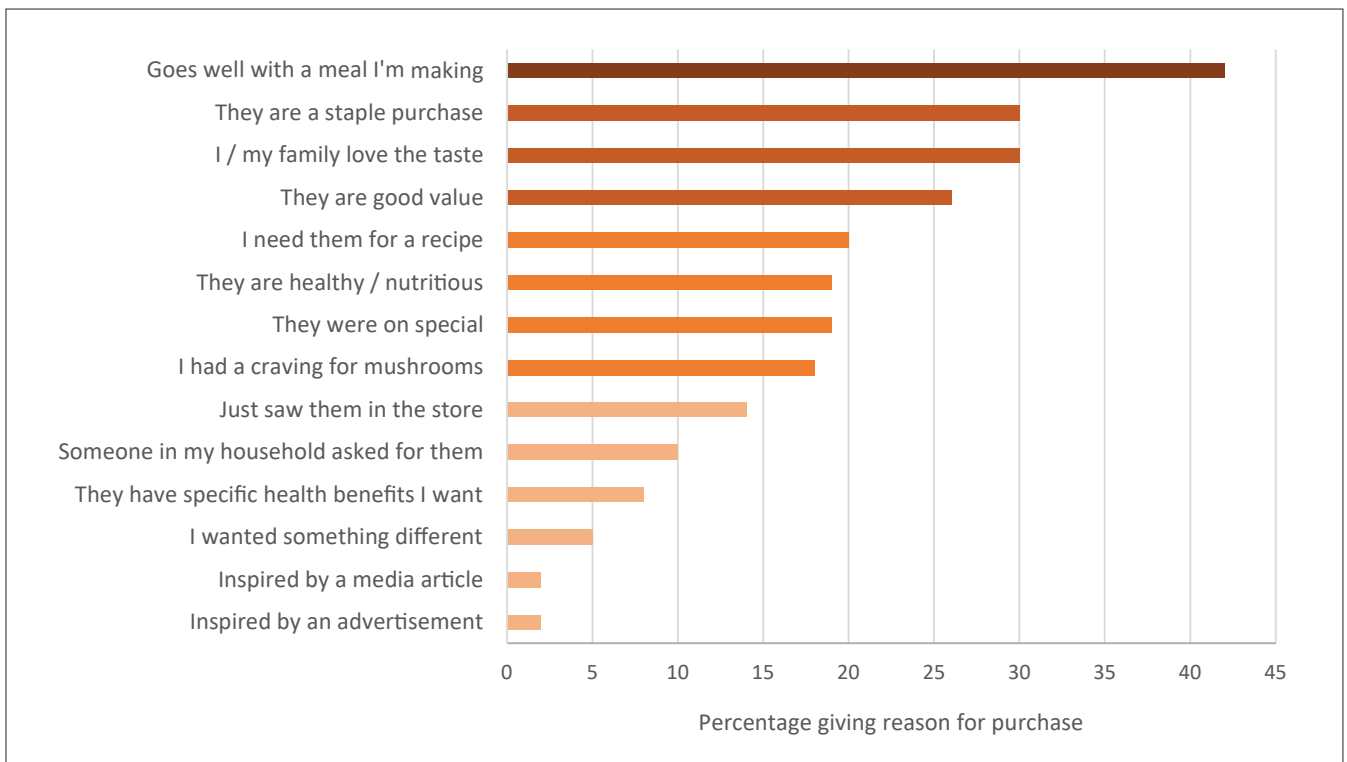
**19%**

# AMONG THOSE WHO DO PURCHASE MUSHROOMS, THEY GENERALLY PLAN TO GET THEM ONCE PER WEEK – AND A MIX OF FORMATS AND AMOUNTS ARE PURCHASED

MUSHROOMS PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR – MUSHROOMS PURCHASERS



On average how often do you buy mushrooms? How much would you typically buy, and what proportion of purchases are planned or impulsive?



Reasons given by consumers for purchasing mushrooms

To further examine the relative importance of health claims, participants were asked to choose the best and worst item/factor in given lists. Repeating this several times allows discrimination between different factors – rather than people just saying **everything** is important.

Claims were then assessed against the criteria of appeal, credibility and uniqueness.

The standout result from this was claims that relate to healthy immune systems (perhaps unsurprising in COVID-19 times!) are most likely to encourage purchase.

This claim ranked significantly higher than all other claims for all three criteria

However, some other claims were not far behind. For example, claims relating to fibre for a healthy gut, reduced risk of prostate/ovarian cancer, Vitamin D plus phosphorous for healthy teeth and bones and reducing inflammation, all scored well.

Claims around Vitamin D and fibre were also considered 'credible' by participants. They were less likely to believe claims relating to putting mushrooms in the sun to generate Vitamin D, or that including mushrooms reduced the Glycaemic Index (GI) of a meal.

In summary, the claims that were considered to be appealing, credible and unique were:

1. "Contains antioxidants and Vitamin D for a healthy immune system"
2. "Contains Vitamin D, which is essential for calcium absorption"

These claims are most likely to influence purchase, likely because they are simple, easy to understand and linked to a tangible health benefit.

Claiming a link between mushrooms and reduced risk of prostate/ovarian cancer was appealing and unique but was less believable. However, if this could be definitively substantiated through research it could be a compelling driver for purchase.

Unsurprisingly, health claims resonated most with older consumers, while younger mushroom buyers were less concerned about health issues. Despite these age trends, it was clear that health was neither a barrier to mushroom consumption, nor was it something new or unknown.

The key barriers to purchasing mushrooms centre around taste, texture, price and awareness. While promotion of health benefits may help to drive awareness, the researchers concluded that health messaging will have limited impact in driving category penetration or frequency.

To leverage this research for most impact, the results have been shared with the Hort Innovation R&D team

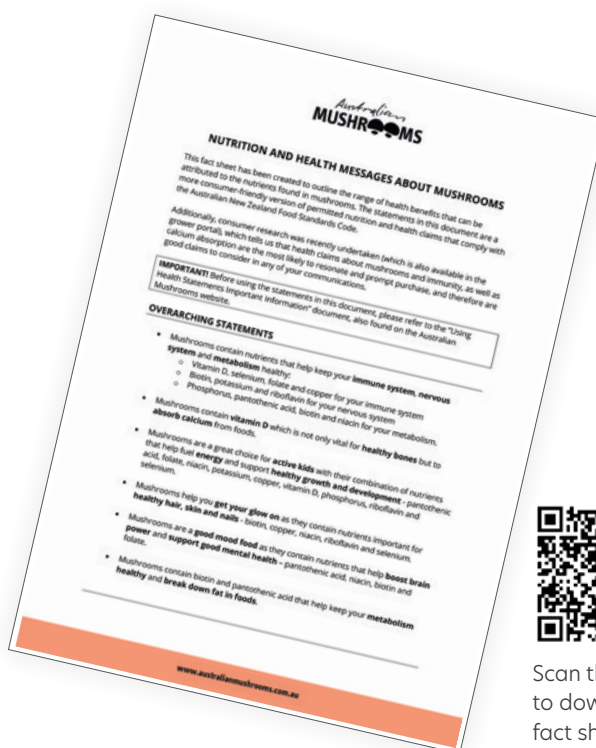
and communication agencies, including advertising, media, PR and social media. Health-focussed messages should be tailored using the strongest and clearest claims to have a greater chance of driving consumer behaviour to increase demand for mushrooms.

### Using this information

A fact sheet outlining the range of health benefits that can be attributed to Australian mushrooms is now available online (<http://bitly.ws/taZe>) or scan the QR code below.

The statements are written in consumer-friendly language, with clear advice on how to use the claims to ensure they are compliant with the Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code (FSANZ).

The claims relate to benefits to the immune system, metabolism, antioxidants, heart health and gut health.



Scan this QR code to download the fact sheet

