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UQ research finds Australians' food habits have changed

Cleverly marketed convenience foods combined with time-poor households have resulted in changed eating habits for Australian families, a recent [UQ PhD](#) has found.

Nutritionist Lisa Schubert used in-depth interviews, participant observation, diaries and questionnaires to investigate food strategies in family households where time available for food provisioning was limited.

"Increasingly convenience foods and services play a part in shaping family diets," Dr Schubert said.

"This has happened not only because of the pressure of scheduling time for family food provisioning, but also because of the evolving concept of what constitutes proper meals."

Completed through UQ's School of Population Health, Dr Schubert's thesis offered several recommendations for improving attitudes towards the importance of food and nutrition.

"Unless public health researchers make an attempt to understand the utility and appeal of new practices in food consumption, we will have a poor foundation for making food and nutrition policy that supports eating well rather than alienate our target audience," Dr Schubert said.

"Contemporary evolution in food habits is occurring at the same time as we, as a society, are negotiating complex changes in gender roles, work patterns, family life and food systems.

"We need to attempt to understand the big picture, and how all this comes to bear on everyday decision making, if we are going to succeed in addressing some of the public health nutrition issues that we are now facing."

Dr Schubert said her research identified a need for food and nutrition policy makers to better deliver healthy policy in a supportive way.

"Instead of supporting an exaggerated belief in the power of social marketing campaigns, nutrition labelling and a decontextualised food literacy, policy makers need to incorporate a better understanding of the needs of those responsible for family food provisioning as well as the needs of those dependent on this food work," she said.

Titled *Diet and Domestic Life in 21st Century Australia: An Exploration of Time and Convenience in Family Food Provisioning*, Dr Schubert's thesis was completed under the supervision of Dr Megan Jennaway from the [School of Population Health](#) and Dr Helen Johnson from the [School of Social Science](#).

Dr Schubert will receive her PhD during the 11am ceremony on Friday, December 11, alongside fellow graduates from the Faculty of Health Sciences.

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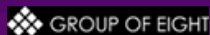
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