



# Fans roast Loser foods

**Kelmeny Fraser**

THE first major line of meal replacement products to hit supermarket shelves has sparked criticism by dietitians and devotees of the reality television show linked to the goods.

While watching contestants on Channel 10's *The Biggest Loser* sweat it out in their quest to shed weight, some viewers have branded the Biggest Loser Club meal replacement range a "sell-out".

The meal replacement shakes, soups and bars are being sold by the affiliated online weight loss club, The Biggest Loser Club, through Coles and Woolworths supermarkets nationally.

But the show's latest contestants will not use the range as part of their intensive fitness regimes.

While former *Biggest Loser* contestants, including Sam Rouen and Alison Braun, have contracts with the club to endorse the range, it is understood not all former contestants are happy with the move.

Viewers last month opened fire on the products, with one entry on the show's online forum asking: "What happened to shifting from highly processed foods to more healthy, natural raw foods?"

Dietitians Association of Aus-



**CONTRACT:** Former Biggest Loser contestant Alison Braun

tralia state spokeswoman Tara Diversi said the products sent a confusing message to viewers trying to follow the show's message of portion control and exercise.

"I just remember the first couple of episodes where contestants weren't able to use meal replacements," Ms Diversi said. "It is a bit of a confusing message."

Ms Diversi said she was concerned meal replacement products were being sold in supermarkets,

saying there were healthier ways for people to lose weight.

"Young people particularly are looking for that quick fix," she said.

But Biggest Loser Club chief executive Scott Penn said the products were clearly labelled as to who they suited and included a free pass to the club, where expert advice could be found.

"What we already knew was that we have thousands of (club) members already using replacement products," Mr Penn said.

"This is part of an overall weight-loss plan, not a total diet replacement.

"Meal replacements for many people are purely a convenience product."

Other former contestants have gone on to endorse various meal replacement brands.

University of Queensland Associate Professor of Medicine Luis Vitetta said the products needed to be used under the care of a doctor.

"You go to the supermarket, buy it off the shelf and you are then patient and practitioner, and that is not how this should be done," Associate Prof Vitetta said.

**Have your say on The Biggest Loser at [www.thesundaymail.com.au/links](http://www.thesundaymail.com.au/links)**



**TAKING SIDES**

**Are former *The Biggest Loser* contestants sending the right message by endorsing meal replacement products?**

**YES: Scott Penn**  
**Biggest Loser Club chief executive officer**

MEAL replacements for many people are purely a convenience product.

There are literally hundreds and thousands of people using meal replacement products and we thought, 'If people are already using them why don't we come up with our own?'

We are upfront on our packaging in terms of who they are suitable for.

They are not to be a total diet replacement and we are very clear on that.

This is part of an overall weight-loss plan, not a total diet replacement.

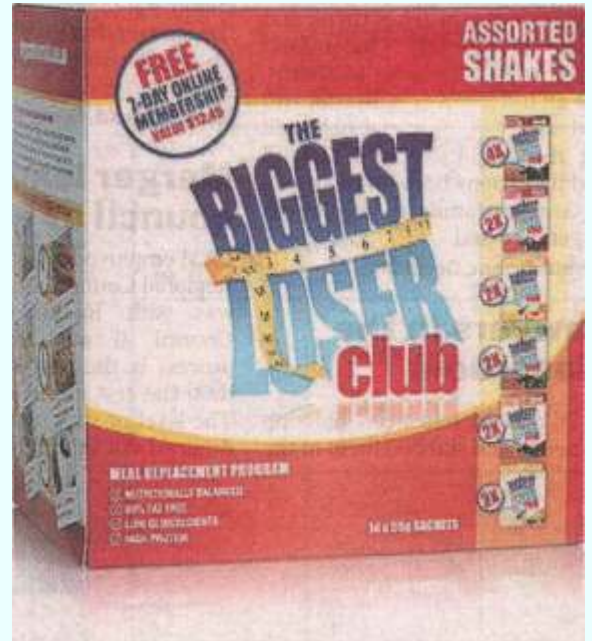
**NO: Tara Diversi**  
**Dietitian Association of Australia state spokeswoman**

I JUST remember the first couple of episodes where contestants weren't able to use meal replacements.

It is a bit of a confusing message.

I think they can have their place in weight loss and weight management, but you need to make sure a meal replacement is what you are getting.

There are a lot healthier ways to do it (lose weight). I think young people would definitely be influenced. Young people particularly are looking for that quick fix.



**CONTROVERSY:** TV's *The Biggest Loser* meal replacement products have sparked a diet debate