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AUSTRALIA, SHOULD WE BE INSTA-SHAMED OF OURSELVES?
Virgin Mobile challenges Aussies to lose the filters and share what they're really eating to help those in need.

July 15, 2015: Sharing photos of perfectly styled, overtly filtered meals on social media is something Australians love to do, and new research from Virgin Mobile has shown just how far we’ll go to get that perfect shot for Instagram. But today, Virgin Mobile is challenging Australians to get real and start posting everything they’re eating – the good, the bad and the downright un-filtered – because every food photo could mean a real meal for someone in need.

According to research for Virgin Mobile almost half (49 per cent) of Australians regularly post food pictures on social media and as a nation we are posting a whopping 71 million food photos per year. Our newsfeeds are overflowing with pictures of food. However, two million Australians are reliant on food relief every year and 90 per cent of Australian food relief agencies are not able to meet demand. It would seem that while we’re sharing meals on Instagram, we’re not sharing them where they are really needed.

To tackle this imbalance, last year Virgin Mobile launched #mealforameal. Every time someone takes a photo of a meal and shares it on social media with the hashtag #mealforameal, Virgin Mobile will donate to OzHarvest so they may deliver a real meal to a person in need. So far, over 260,000 food pics have been turned into real meals but Virgin Mobile want to go even bigger.

This year Virgin Mobile want all food pictures – they want the 3am kebabs, the pre-payday lunch of instant noodles and Tuesday night’s spaghetti on toast, just as much as the 8-course degustation in the hottest new restaurant. Why? Because every meal counts for a good cause.

However, it may be difficult to convince some to lose the filters. Virgin Mobile’s research revealed three in four (74 per cent) of Aussie social media users that post photos wouldn’t post a food photo if it didn’t look good enough to share.

Our Insta-shame doesn’t stop there. 63 per cent Aussie food posters admit they would never post a picture of their guilty food pleasure such as last night’s leftovers, a fatty takeaway or their secret stash of chocolate!

It would seem we are literally throwing away the chance to turn even more food pictures into meals for people in need just because they don’t look the part.

It’s not all bad though. The research revealed three in four Aussie social media users (74 per cent) would be happy to be more truthful with their posts if it was a good cause.

This year Virgin Mobile has partnered with celebrated French chef of Guillaume and Bistro Guillaume fame, Guillaume Brahimi, to help Aussies get behind the cause and loosen up their styling and filtering. He says:

“I’m always on my mobile taking pictures of food. I love that social media has allowed us to celebrate and be inspired by food. But I’ll admit, I can spend a bit too long getting the perfect shot! I strive for perfection in everything I do – the best ingredients, technique, presentation. To be a good chef you have to! But when you consider that Virgin Mobile is turning every food picture – good and bad – into a real meal for someone less fortunate, why wouldn’t you start posting everything you’re eating? Come on Australia, every meal counts.”

More confessions of Australian Insta-food snobs

The research revealed the lengths Aussie social media users who post photos go to share the perfect picture on social media;

- 41 per cent would happily stand on a chair to get the perfect food shot.
- 30 per cent exaggerate about how good a meal is when they post it to social media.
- 57 per cent post food pictures just to get a reaction from friends and family.

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1 The research was conducted among 1,011 Australians aged 18 or older who regularly use social media and post images of food / meals on social media.
2 DAFF, National Food Plan 2012
3 End Hunger Report, Foodbank, 2012
The research also revealed 61 per cent of Aussie social media users admit to at least one of the below behaviours before they post their foodie picture on social media:

- Re-arranging the dish to get the perfect shot;
- Claiming somebody else’s dish as their own;
- Requesting their fellow diners wait to eat so they can post the perfect shot; and
- Cooking a meal specifically to share it on social media.

Ronni Kahn, founder and CEO of OzHarvest weighs in:

“Last year, the #mealforameal initiative enabled OzHarvest to deliver a quarter of a million more meals to Aussies in need. The initiative was so successful because Virgin Mobile added purpose to an everyday act, giving people the opportunity to turn their mobile phone behaviour into something more meaningful. This year we’re asking people to post every one of their food pics - the good the bad and the ugly - no matter what! The more food pics tagged #mealforameal the more meals we can deliver to those in need.”

David Scribner, head of Virgin Mobile Australia, concludes:

“The phenomenon of snapping and sharing food pics through your mobile is showing no signs of slowing. Our mobiles are a one-stop shop for food photography, allowing people to snap their meals in high quality and immediately share them through social media. The success of #mealforameal is testament to this phenomenon and we’re so proud of how Australia has shown its support so far. We’d encourage more Aussies to get snapping and tagging, whatever they’re eating, because every food pic could mean a meal for someone in need.”

To find out more about the #mealforameal initiative and the incredible work that OzHarvest do, including further ways you can show your support, visit makingmobilebetter.com.au.

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For further information or to arrange an interview with Guillaume Brahimi and / or a Virgin Mobile spokesperson, please contact:

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About the Virgin Mobile Research Study:

- The research was conducted by Lonergan Research among 1,011 Australians aged 18 or older who regularly use social media and post images of food / meals on social media.
- The study was conducted online amongst members of a permission-based panel.
- Fieldwork commenced on 26 June 2015 and was completed on 30 June 2015.
- After interviewing, data was weighted to the latest population estimates sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

About Virgin Mobile Australia: Making Mobile Better

Virgin Mobile launched in Australia in 2000, based on Richard Branson’s belief that we could do mobile better. Better for you, and better for our planet. We’ve been rocking the boat ever since, and we’re not stopping now, because it’s just how we work. Innovative products and a commitment to great value for money are in our DNA.

Just look at Data Rollover: in an Australian-first innovation, we rescue your unused data and roll it over to the next month on all new Postpaid mobile plans, so now you don’t lose what you don’t use. We also roll over your unused calls and text: hey, you paid for it, so we figure you deserve a second shot at using it.

We also think you should be able to call or text your friends and family on our network within Oz as much as you like. So if you’re on a Postpay plan, you can. Voicemail is free within Oz too, because answering the phone should be your call. And backing all this is the power of the Optus 4G Plus network, which just keeps getting stronger, and allows us to focus on what’s most important — you.

Best of all, because people and planet matter to us, we’re turning your mobile phone into a force for good. We’ve already tasted success with #mealforameal, our initiative to turn your social food pics into a feed for someone in need, and there’s plenty more where that came from!

We’re Virgin Mobile, and we’re making mobile better.

OzHarvest

OzHarvest is a charity that rescues good quality excess food that would otherwise be discarded. OzHarvest then distributes this food to charities supporting the vulnerable in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Gold Coast, Perth, A.C.T & Newcastle. OzHarvest was founded in 2004 and begun with just one van, delivering 4,000 meals in its first month of operation. OzHarvest now delivers 850,000 meals each month with a fleet of 30 vans! To find out more about OzHarvest and how you can support them (outside the #mealforameal campaign), visit www.ozharvest.org.