JULY 2026

CHOICE

Liquid gold

Extra virgin olive oil taste test

BULK BUYS

Can you save on groceries?

337 products TESTED

- Dishwashing liquids
- Convection microwaves
- Espresso machines
- Multi-cookers
- Slow cookers
- Dutch ovens
- Wall ovens
- Dehumidifiers
- Printers

TOO EASY?

Inside medicinal cannabis consults

THE FOOD ISSUE

Plus Packaged food weight, deepfakes, home insurance & more

Bulking up

Does it pay to buy in bulk?

Where do you sit on the shopping spectrum? Are you a "buy exactly what you need and nothing more" person? Or are you one of those sickos that goes ballistic when they spot a half-decent unit price on a bulk buy?

It may surprise you to read that, unlike most of the people who work here at CHOICE (particularly our resident cheapskate, Grace), I'm mostly a "buy what I need" kinda guy.

I have my reasons.

If I'm buying something in bulk, I'm also consuming it in bulk

Reason #1 is my firm belief that the bulk-buying game often suckers you into purchasing items you didn't really want or need in the first place. Case in point: if a block of chocolate is on sale at Coles, I'm buying it. No question. Apply that thinking to a bulk buy, and I'm suddenly knees deep in a product that wasn't even on the shopping list.

Reason #2 is – generally – if I'm buying something in bulk, I'm also consuming it in bulk. I bought a two-for-one 12-pack of Coke Zero cans the other day, and almost overnight? My two-cans-a-day habit instantly transformed like a Pokemon into a five-a-day habit.

I became a Cokemon.

Within days, all the cans were gone. 24 cans! Now I have an evolved compulsion to guzzle even more of that dark elixir on a daily basis. My guts are in shambles. My caffeine intake is unsustainable. If I stand still for a second I can feel my whole body vibrate! That's probably not good! So I stick to buying just the one can when I need it.

Don't get me wrong – there are products worth buying in bulk. Everyday items that get used no matter what at measurable, consistent rates. We're talking bin bags, we're talking toilet paper, we're talking dishwasher tablets. I'm more than comfortable buying a metric butt-load of these when they're on sale, because the speed at which they are consumed is not dependent on my non-existent self discipline.

But there's one more issue to navigate: storage. My wife recently bulk-bought one of the biggest boxes

of toilet paper I've ever seen in my 45 long years on this earth. Usually I would consult the oracle (my wife) on where this behemoth of a package should be stored, but she was travelling for work. Instead I simply stared at the box in a fugue state for 25 minutes before mindlessly placing it in the garage, beneath the table tennis table I never use.

So does buying in bulk cause more problems than it solves? Ultimately it depends on the context and the human beings doing the purchasing. If you need convincing either way, head to page 21 where our resident supermarket expert Marg Rafferty delves into the pros and cons.

Enjoy the issue!

Mark Serrels
CHOICE Editorial Director
Email: mserrels@choice.com.au

CHOICE

CHOICE helps you find the best goods and services, and avoid the worst. Member-funded and nonprofit since 1959, your subscription supports our mission to fight for better, safer and fairer products and services. We buy every product we test, so our reviews and ratings remain completely independent and unbiased. Your subscription gives you access to ratings for hundreds of products and services. Our ratings are based on lab tests, expert assessments and surveys of people like you. Beyond testing, we're a powerful voice for consumers, campaigning for stronger rights, tougher standards and a fair deal for all Australians.

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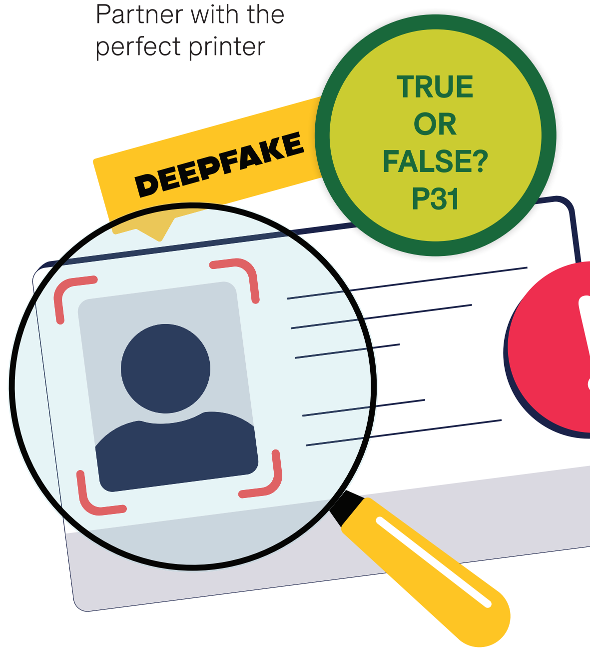

CHOICE magazine provides a selection of our top product reviews. We can't always include all the models we've tested, but you'll always find the products that scored the best. To view complete results for all our tests, go to **choice.com.au**, or call Customer Service on **1800 069 552** to add digital access to your subscription package.

IMAGES: GETTY

CHECKOUT

The latest consumer news in brief

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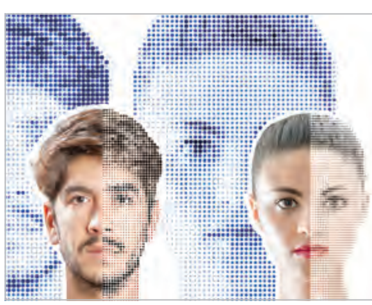


Coles' fake promos were 'illusory'

Any doubt that Coles Supermarkets systematically misled customers for years with fake promotional prices was put to rest by the Federal Court in mid-May. In a groundbreaking case brought by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), the court found that 13 out of 14 examples of Coles' 'Down Down' pricing misled consumers between February 2022 and May 2023. But this was just a sample period of time – the Coles promo had been running since 2010.

The court ruled that the discounts weren't genuine because the products in question weren't sold at the previous 'was' price long enough to constitute an actual sale. The supermarket simply inflated prices for a short while and then dropped them back down, though sometimes not as low as the original standard prices. The ACCC alleged that the discounts "were illusory and that the representations were false or misleading", in breach of the Australian Consumer Law.

"We continue to call on the federal government to implement the ACCC supermarkets inquiry recommendations in full, by introducing minimum information requirements for price displays and discount promotions, including the previous price of the product, the date range over which that previous price applied, and the percentage of the discount," says CHOICE director of campaigns Andy Kelly.

ANDY KOLLMORGEN

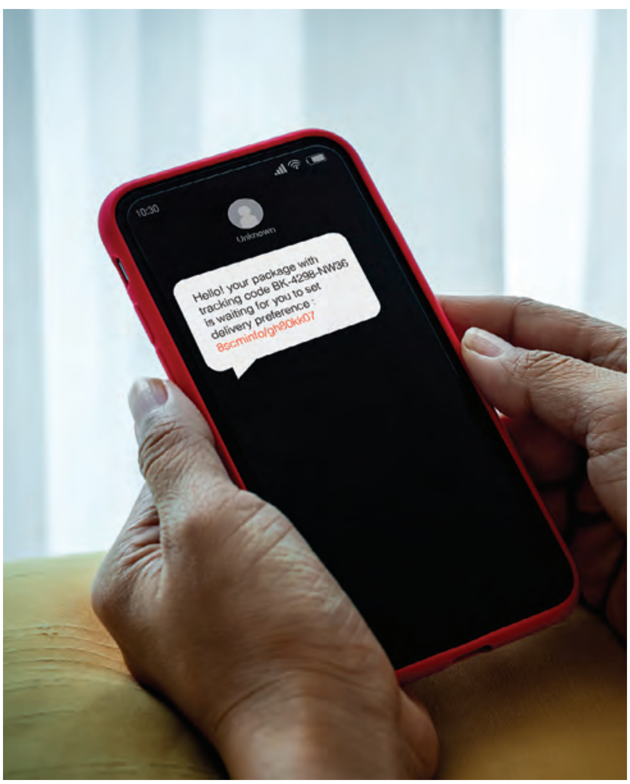
ACCC takes Amazon to court for button battery safety failures

The risk button batteries pose to children has been well documented and CHOICE has been at the forefront of raising the alarm about these potentially deadly products. Mandatory standards requiring manufacturers to design battery compartments that can't be accessed by children and to include safety warnings on packaging came into effect in 2022, but adherence has been spotty at best. Since 2024, we've uncovered dozens of items sold on online marketplaces like Shein, Temu and Amazon that failed to meet the standards. Questions have lingered for years about who's responsible for product safety in these instances – the makers of the products or the online marketplaces that sell them?

Now, in what could prove to be a groundbreaking case, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is taking legal action against Amazon for allegedly selling products containing button batteries that came without the required safety warnings.

CHOICE director of campaigns Andy Kelly says, "This will be an important test of the law in relation to the level of control that online marketplaces have over the products sold on their platforms and whether they can be held responsible for those breaches."

ANDY KOLLMORGEN



Scam texts becoming easier to spot

It should now be easier to spot scam text messages, thanks to new rules governing how businesses and organisations can use SMS to interact with consumers. Any legitimate group that sends text messages under its own name should by now have registered that name (or sender ID) with Australia's new SMS Sender Register, making it easier for telcos to spot impersonators. The register was due to come into force on 1 July and is designed to prevent scammers from being able to make it look like their messages come from trusted brands.

Criminals have been using technology to achieve this and posing as organisations Australians are likely to trust, such as banks or government agencies, and sending out SMS messages en masse. Some recipients' phones have sorted these messages into the same thread as legitimate texts from those organisations. By having a record of who has registered an organisation's ID, it's now easier for telcos to spot messages coming from unofficial sources trying to use that same ID. Meanwhile, any messages being sent under an ID that hasn't been registered will now be flagged as 'Unverified' when you receive them on your phone.

LIAM KENNEDY

IMAGES: GETTY

Aussie food producers warn of higher grocery prices

Australian consumers should expect an impending rise in grocery bills, according to the Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC), the peak body for grocery suppliers.

A sizable chunk of the world's oil, gas and fertiliser passes through the Strait of Hormuz, and the conflict in the Middle East has sent shockwaves across the world's supply chains.

CEO of the AFCG, Colm Maguire, says that unlike the pandemic, the current crisis is more than just a temporary bottleneck. He says that costs will need to be passed onto consumers to protect jobs and ensure the sustainability of the sector.

"This is a fundamental shift in the cost of doing business. From the fertilisers used on our farms to the fuel in the trucks that transport and the energy powering our factories, every single link in the chain is more expensive."

Aside from transport costs, the AFGC says petroleum is a key ingredient in plastic packaging, everyday items such as nappies and tissue boxes, and vital to energy-intensive manufacturing.

While the industry claims it has absorbed most of the costs so far, customers have already felt the crunch. According to the CHOICE Consumer Pulse survey data in March, more households than ever (88%) were concerned about the cost of groceries.

JAMES WORSFOLD

An update on sunscreens

Last year, a CHOICE investigation became a global story after we revealed that 16 out of 20 sunscreens that we tested failed to meet their labelled SPF claims. Straight away, there were calls for stronger sunscreen regulation in Australia. If you're wondering what has happened since, here's an update.

Earlier this year the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) proposed reforms to how sunscreens are tested and labelled in Australia. The proposals include some big potential improvements, such as mandating a more reliable testing method and improving oversight of testing labs.

One proposal we don't support is changing SPF labels from the current system (such as SPF 30+ and 50+) to broader categories like "high" and "very high" protection.

The TGA invited public submission on these changes. Our submission made it clear that CHOICE supports the use of modern sunscreen testing methods, better oversight of labs and a range of other proposed reforms. But we raised concerns that replacing SPF numbers with vague labels like "high" and "very high" could make it harder for consumers to compare products and make informed choices, without actually improving the liability of manufacturers' claims.

CHOICE will continue to push for sunscreen regulations that Australians can have confidence in. That's why we set out to test sunscreens in the first place, and that's what our whole campaign has been about.

MORGAN CAMPBELL

Consumers urged to shop around as power prices drop

Australians in many parts of the country are being told to check for cheaper electricity deals this month as new benchmark prices kick in. Prices on "default offer" plans are falling in NSW, South East Queensland and Victoria by as much as 10% from the start of this month.

Energy retailers are legally required to offer these default prices to people who don't or can't shop around and take up more competitive market offers. Only a small number of households are on these default plans, but retailers use their rates as a reference point from which to base their market offers. Therefore, as default prices drop, they're expected to drag down the market offers most households use with them.

You might be on an older, more expensive electricity plan without knowing

But retailers won't automatically move you to a cheaper deal and you might be on an older, more expensive plan without knowing. Therefore, it's a good time to shop around and check for 'better off' notices on your bill. Cheaper prices aren't available everywhere: default offers have increased slightly in South Australia and different arrangements apply in regulated markets where you don't have a choice of retailer.

LIAM KENNEDY

Where consumers are noticing price increases the most

Earlier this year, we asked CHOICE supporters about their experiences with recent price rises. 95% of the over 4000 people who took the survey said that they'd noticed a significant increase in the price of goods and services in the past three months, pointing to supermarkets, fuel stations, insurers and energy companies as the most common culprits.

From 1 July, new rules will come into effect to ban excessive pricing in the supermarket sector. While it's encouraging to see action taken on supermarket pricing, they aren't the only big businesses that seem like they might be cashing in on the cost-of-living crisis.

CHOICE is continuing to call for an economy-wide ban on price gouging to tackle excessive and exploitative price increases, wherever they might occur. Add your name to the petition now at **choice.com.au/pricegougingpetition**.

JORDAN CORNELIUS

IMAGES: GETTY

CHOICE launches Corporate Climate Accountability project

For the first time ever, large corporations in Australia will soon be forced to tell us the climate-related risks and opportunities to their business.

This publicly available data is supposed to help us all hold companies accountable for their emissions and to help drive positive change across industries including banking, insurance, retail, energy and resource companies.

At a time when greenwashing is rife and public trust in corporations to do right by the environment has never been lower, this is welcome news, but what will it actually change? We want to know just how useful these climate statements are for everyday consumers. Are they just another exercise in greenwashing and public relations spin, or will they help inform your decisions about what to buy or where to invest your money? CHOICE is asking these big questions and more through our new Corporate Climate Accountability Project, and we need your help.

Sign up to come along on a journey with us as we seek to understand what you, the consumer, want and expect from Australia's biggest companies when it comes to company disclosures. Find out what businesses are actually delivering in voluntary and mandatory schemes. Help us decide how we can more effectively demand transparency and drive change. And learn how to spot greenwashing and hold big business to account.

Visit **choice.com.au/climateaccountability** or use the QR code below.

JARNI BLAKKARLY

Credit at 100% interest called out as illegal

Buying a household appliance on credit at the online retailer Walker Stores – back when it was still in business – involved going to an affiliated website called Snaffle and signing up. It wouldn't have been a good idea. In May, the Federal Court imposed a $33.5 million penalty against Walker Stores (now in liquidation) and Snaffle for miscalculating interest on more than 38,000 contracts. Customers were charged almost $20 million more interest than they should have been, nearly double the amount legally allowed.

The court also found that Snaffle's pricing structure for three sample credit contracts breached the 48% annual rate cap, which includes both interest and fees. With fees included, customers would have been charged an annual rate between 88% and 103%. The case was lodged by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, and deputy chair Sarah Court says the substantial penalty was applied due to "egregious misconduct that impacted tens of thousands of Australians".

"Consumers who enter these types of credit arrangements are often financially vulnerable. Charging unlawful interest can significantly exacerbate the customer's difficult financial position," Court says, adding that the outcome "sends a clear message: businesses must comply with the law when offering credit, and not structure their business to avoid consumer protections".

ANDY KOLLMORGEN

Apple's first 'cheap' laptop

MacBooks have traditionally been a pretty-high end purchase with price tags outside the reach of typical users. Those RRPs can be hard to justify for average users and students that don't need a tonne of processing power.

But with the new MacBook Neo, Apple has firmly planted a flag in the sub-$1000 laptop category. It may not be the fastest kid on the block, but boy is it powerful for the price.

It may not be the fastest kid on the block, but boy is it powerful for the price

While the Neo is lacking some of the frills that you'll find in the standard MacBook range, Apple has kept costs down by using the same processor as the iPhone 16 Pro. It's hard to believe that a smartphone chip is powerful enough to run a laptop, but this just shows how far mobile processors have come.

Day-to-day tasks like web browsing, office work, school assignments, communications (for example, FaceTime) and music and video streaming are a breeze. There's even enough grunt for gaming as well (after school, of course), as long as you don't push the graphics beyond "very high".

It can run most software for high-school media classes, photo and music editing are no problem, and it can even handle basic video work and 3D-modelling programs like Blender. But highly detailed work or more advanced design and entertainment software may be too much.

At around five hours, battery life is decent enough. It won't last a whole school day, but the supplied 20-watt charger is pretty small, with a braided cable that's easy to coil and carry around.

The case is made out of recycled aluminium, which gives it a decently robust, solid feel. It should be pretty resistant to daily wear when you're out of the house, though a carry bag is still strongly recommended.

It's comfortable to use, with a 13-inch glossy screen that's relatively bright with high-dynamic range (HDR), wide viewing angles and very good colour and detail. At 1.23kg it's a little heavier than other laptops in the same price category, which is worth keeping in mind if you plan to travel with it.

As this is an affordable MacBook, some specifications may not meet everyone's performance requirements out of the box.

By default, you get a 256GB solid state drive. This may not be much in today's digital media-heavy world, so you may need to factor in the cost of an optional 512GB upgrade, external storage device or a cloud backup plan.

It also has only 8GB of RAM and two USB-C ports. You'll probably have to pick up a USB-C hub if you plan to connect a second screen.

But these are pretty minor shortcomings when the main drawcard of the Neo is its price tag. Apple has entered the affordable computing space (relatively speaking) with a very competitive product that gives its Windows counterparts a legitimate run for their money.

So if you've ever been Apple-curious but couldn't cover the cost, this could be the laptop you've been looking for.

ELIAS PLASTIRAS

FIRST LOOK

APPLE MACBOOK NEO
PRICE $899
(default configuration)
CONTACT apple.com/au/
★★★★½

IMAGES: GETTY | APPLE

Self-feeding baby bottle devices permanently banned

The ACCC has issued an immediate and permanent ban on baby bottle self-feeding devices due to the risk of injury or death to infants. The devices captured in the ban include those that position a baby bottle so the infant can feed without adult supervision. The ACCC says they come with risks such as death from choking, aspiration or suffocation.

There are now significant penalties for businesses which sell these products.

"Each year, we set our product safety priorities to target and increase awareness of high-risk unsafe consumer goods. This year, our focus has been on unsafe products sold in digital markets and product safety issues for young children," ACCC Deputy Chair Catriona Lowe says.

"Baby bottle self-feeding devices pose an unacceptable risk of injury or death to infants as a result of choking, suffocation and aspiration, as babies do not have the ability to regulate the flow of milk or remove the bottle from their mouth themselves."

Consumers who already have a device are urged to stop using them immediately.

JARNI BLAKKARLY

Advocates urge government to expand super performance test

Since 2021, the government has run an annual performance test on superannuation products, designed to hold funds to account with real consequences for poor performance. The annual performance test has helped members by lowering fees and saving Australians hundreds of millions of dollars for their retirement. The results of the 2026 performance test will be published by the regulator, APRA, at the end of August.

But the test still has two major gaps. First, people who are retired don't have the same safeguards. Second, platform super funds are mostly not checked. These funds allow members to invest across thousands of options, but fewer than 5% are tested.

Now the government is consulting on extending the superannuation performance test to platform investments but is still leaving retirees without this protection.

Super Consumers Australia welcomes greater scrutiny of investment options on platforms, but is disappointed that retirees still won't be protected from poor-performing investment options. CEO Xavier O'Halloran says this creates an uneven level of protection at a critical point in retirement.

"Australians should be able to trust that every part of the super system is held to strong performance standards, whether they are saving for retirement or already retired," says O'Halloran.

ANTOINETTE DYCE

Telcos warned against passing on increased spectrum licence fees

Consumer advocates say telcos shouldn't pass costs onto mobile users after the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) decided to charge more for spectrum licences. ACMA and advocates say mobile service operators can afford to pay the $7.32 billion cost to renew their licences.

Amid industry uproar, telcos have described the renewal fees as a tax and threatened to pass them onto customers.

"Telcos can afford this, they are in a very strong position," says Carol Bennett, CEO of the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network.

Telstra, Optus, TPG and NBN Co hold licences allowing them to use Australia's limited spectrum radio waves to deliver mobile phone and broadband services. ACMA has decided to charge them $7.32 billion to renew these licences, which are due to expire in coming years. The figure is higher than the $5–6.2 billion price range ACMA previously put forward, but less than the nominal $8.2 billion paid for the licences last decade. Telcos say they're facing tougher market conditions compared to ten years ago, but ACMA believes they can afford the fees.

LIAM KENNEDY

Unpacking the mystery behind rising home insurance premiums

Has your home insurance premium gone up this year? If so, you're not alone. Many Australians are opening their renewal notices to find they're paying significantly more than last year, often with little explanation as to why.

At a time when household budgets are already under pressure, many consumers are being asked to pay hundreds of dollars more for cover without being given clear information about what is driving the increase.

That's why CHOICE is investigating how insurers communicate premium increases and whether consumers are being provided with the information they need to understand and assess rising insurance costs.

While insurers often point to broad factors such as inflation, extreme weather events and increasing claims costs, consumers are rarely told how these factors have affected their individual premium or why their increase differs from someone else's.

To help with this research, we've asked supporters to share copies of their home insurance renewal notices. More than 80 people have already contributed, helping us build a clearer picture of what's happening across the market. We're currently analysing the data and speaking with consumers about their experiences, and we'll be sharing more of our findings soon. In the meantime, if your premium has changed and you'd like to share your experience, we'd love to hear from you. Email us at **campaigns@choice.com.au**.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their renewal notices and experiences. Your contribution is helping us better understand rising insurance costs and advocate for greater transparency for consumers.

HARSHINI SHANMUGAKANI

Best travel insurance for skiing in New Zealand

Travel insurance is essential for any overseas trip. Medical protection is critical abroad, especially for evacuation and repatriation, even in countries with reciprocal agreements like New Zealand. We decided to look at comprehensive policies for snow trips to New Zealand because these also include cancellation cover (which is important given how expensive ski holidays can be), cover for natural disasters, and a good level of baggage cover, in case you're travelling with pricey gear.

Winter sports cover only comes as standard with one product in our review. For all the others it needs to be added as an optional extra, which increases the price by about 60%.

According to our database of over 8000 market-representative quotes for NZ ski trips, the policies that provide the best level of cover for your dollar are the comprehensive policies from NRMA, Allianz, Worldcare and Medibank. Each of these achieved a CHOICE Expert Rating for Skiing in NZ of 80% or more. This score is made up of 40% snow-cover price score combined with 60% cover score.

JANE BARDELL

Australians not keen on AI in advertising

Most Australians are concerned about the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in advertising and expect greater transparency, according to the latest national research from Ad Standards, the advertising regulator.

The survey, conducted by Roy Morgan, found almost three in four Australians are concerned about the use of AI-generated content in ads, particularly its potential to deceive people with fake content. Around half of respondents are also concerned AI could reduce creativity in advertising and promote unrealistic beauty standards.

Although around two-thirds of Australians believe ads should be up-front about using AI-generated content, there are currently no rules about disclosing its use.

Ad Standards executive director Greg Wallace says brands should be honest about using AI.

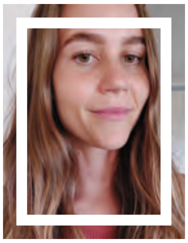
"Being transparent about AI use may help build trust, meet community expectations and enhance brand perception," says Wallace. "Australians are telling us that as AI becomes more common, transparency and responsibility in advertising matter more than ever."

This comes as Australian's distrust in advertising (40%) far outweighs trust (17%), according to the survey.

JAMES WORSFOLD

RANTS AND RAVES

The case against novelty



When I was a tween, I went through a phase of being obsessed with cutesie kitchen appliances. Every time a birthday rolled around, my friends and I would treat each other to specific appliances designed to churn out things like mini donuts (baked, not fried), hot dogs and popcorn. Through the wisdom of hindsight, it's clear that all those things can actually be cooked in a frypan or pot – no speciality appliance required.

I also have no idea where those appliances currently are, but I can only assume they are slowly poisoning our one precious earth in a pile of landfill somewhere. I don't remember using any of them more than once or twice.

Fast forward 20 years and things have gotten worse, not better. Working in the world of products, I am probably more aware than most about just how many different products seem to be popping up. And the reality is, we mostly don't really need them.

Let's explore some of the products on the market in 2026.

Portable blenders. We reviewed the Ninja Blast portable blender (*CHOICE* Apr 26), and my coworker Pru Engel rates it as a holiday item. My question is, do we really need to be blending foods outside our homes? I get there may be some niche circumstances where it comes in handy, but generally speaking, can we not just blend indoors?

Wearable heated blankets. I tried Kmart's offering and I was left thinking: why does this product exist? We already have heated blankets: drape one over your arms and, ta-da! Now you're wearing a heated blanket.

Don't even get me started on novelty clothing, most of which comes from Shein or Temu, but also from big-box retailers like Kmart and Big W. As a dedicated op-shopper, I can't tell you how many 100% polyester shirts emblazoned with pointlessly specific slogans like "Merry Christmas 2022" I've seen filling up secondhand shops. Or flip flops shaped like fish. Most of these products are worn at most once in their 500-year lifetime.

The list of pointless products goes on: novelty waffle makers, vibrating facial cleansers, pie-makers, desktop fridges, omelette makers and, one of my most hated categories of all, tiny "personal" appliances for making miniscule servings of things you can already make using a normal-sized appliance. Kmart, Big W and Target all have a section of their website called "novelty appliances" – surely that should be an oxymoron. Appliances are meant to be useful and reliable devices that serve us for the long haul, not temporary distractions.

All these things might seem like a fun gift or a cheap thrill but, as boring as it sounds, we really do need to think about where they end up once the two-week honeymoon period is over.

It may not give me the same dopamine rush, but I get a different kind of thrill every time I use my stovetop or oven to cook something that other people are using a specialised appliance for.

In a world that always wants to sell us something, before we pull the trigger on our purchase, we really need to ask ourselves the obvious question – do I already own something that does that?

GRACE SMITH

Kmart, Big W and Target all have a section on their website called 'novelty appliances' – surely that should be an oxymoron

IMAGES: GETTY / KMART

ASK THE EXPERTS

Got a niggling question our team can help with?

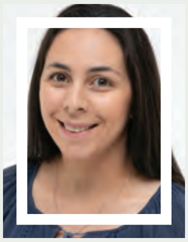
ASK US

Email your question to **asktheexperts@choice.com.au** or write to Ask the Experts, CHOICE, 57 Carrington Rd, Marrickville, NSW 2204.
You can also tap into the 'brains trust' at **www.choice.community**.

Q My family and I are heading to Bali later this year and we've heard that it's common practice to get around on mopeds or scooters while over there. Will our travel insurance cover us for any damage to a moped or another vehicle if we're involved in a scrape?

A CHOICE insurance expert Jodi Bird: Most policies will include cover for riding scooters or mopeds only if you wear a helmet, and many also require you to have an Australian motorbike licence. If you (or your family members) don't have a motorbike licence, you might not be covered if you have an accident – and keep in mind that motorcycle accidents in Bali are not uncommon. Make sure you think about how you're going to get around and read the fine print of your policy documents if you need cover for scooter, moped, or motorbike riding.

Q My partner has been wanting to buy a sandwich press, as we've gotten addicted to the toasted sandwiches at our local cafe and wanted to recreate them at home. But most of the models we see seem to have a Teflon coating, which I'm not keen on. As soon as it gets scratched I guess we'd have to toss it away, which seems terrible for the environment. Can you recommend a hard-wearing model without the easy-to-damage coatings?



A CHOICE kitchen appliances expert Rebecca Ciaramidaro: You're right that most toasted sandwich makers have a non-stick coating. There are some models available that are made from stainless steel or cast iron, though you may struggle to find a non-commercial model (that is, one produced for regular consumers) made from these materials.

If you're wanting to avoid non-stick surfaces and reduce your impact on the environment, I would recommend buying a cast iron grill press instead and use it in conjunction with your existing frypan. The idea is that you simply place your sandwich in a preheated frypan with some oil or butter, and then place the preheated press on top of your sandwich to help achieve an evenly browned crust. If looked after properly, a cast iron grill press can last a lifetime, as opposed to a sandwich press that will eventually need replacing.

Q I do most of my grocery shopping online, and as per CHOICE advice I always look for the cheapest unit pricing on the item I'm buying. But I've noticed that when I sort results by "lowest unit price" on the Woolworths website, it displays some products with a price per 100g and others with a price per 1kg. For example, the $1 Woolies 420g tin of black beans ($2.38/kg) is showing as more expensive than the $3.60 Old El Paso 425g tin ($0.85/100g), even though it's actually much cheaper by weight. Is this a mistake? Or purposefully misleading? And is it illegal?

A CHOICE senior policy adviser Harshini Shanmugakani: You've raised something that has been frustrating us at CHOICE for a while too! Unit pricing is supposed to help shoppers compare products easily, but when some products are shown in "per 100g" and others in "per kg", it becomes harder to tell which item is actually cheaper. We can't say for certain whether this is intentionally misleading or simply a problem with how the website sorting system works, but either way it risks confusing consumers and undermining the purpose of unit pricing. CHOICE is currently doing extensive work on unit pricing, including pushing for clearer and more consistent rules around how unit prices are displayed online, and examples like this are incredibly valuable in helping us identify where the current system is falling short for consumers.

Q I recently bought a blender, and after two months it stopped locking into place properly, so that it would only work if I was holding it in the correct position. I wrote to the company and sent them a video of the problem and they immediately sent me a replacement product. The replacement worked fine for a couple of months, and then it experienced the exact same problem. I've written to the company and they've offered to send yet another replacement. The problem is, at this point I've lost trust in the product and I genuinely feel bad about how many blenders I'm throwing into landfill. Can I ask for a refund instead?

A CHOICE Customer Service: Under the Australian Consumer Law, the replacement item you received from the manufacturer is bound by the same consumer guarantees as the original item. Because the replacement failed to meet the consumer guarantee of "acceptable quality", it is considered a major failure. This means that the retailer cannot force you to accept another replacement or repair; you have the legal right to demand a full refund. We recommend that you write back to the manufacturer to say you have lost trust in the product and you would like to invoke your right to ask for a refund for the faulty product, rather than a replacement.

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