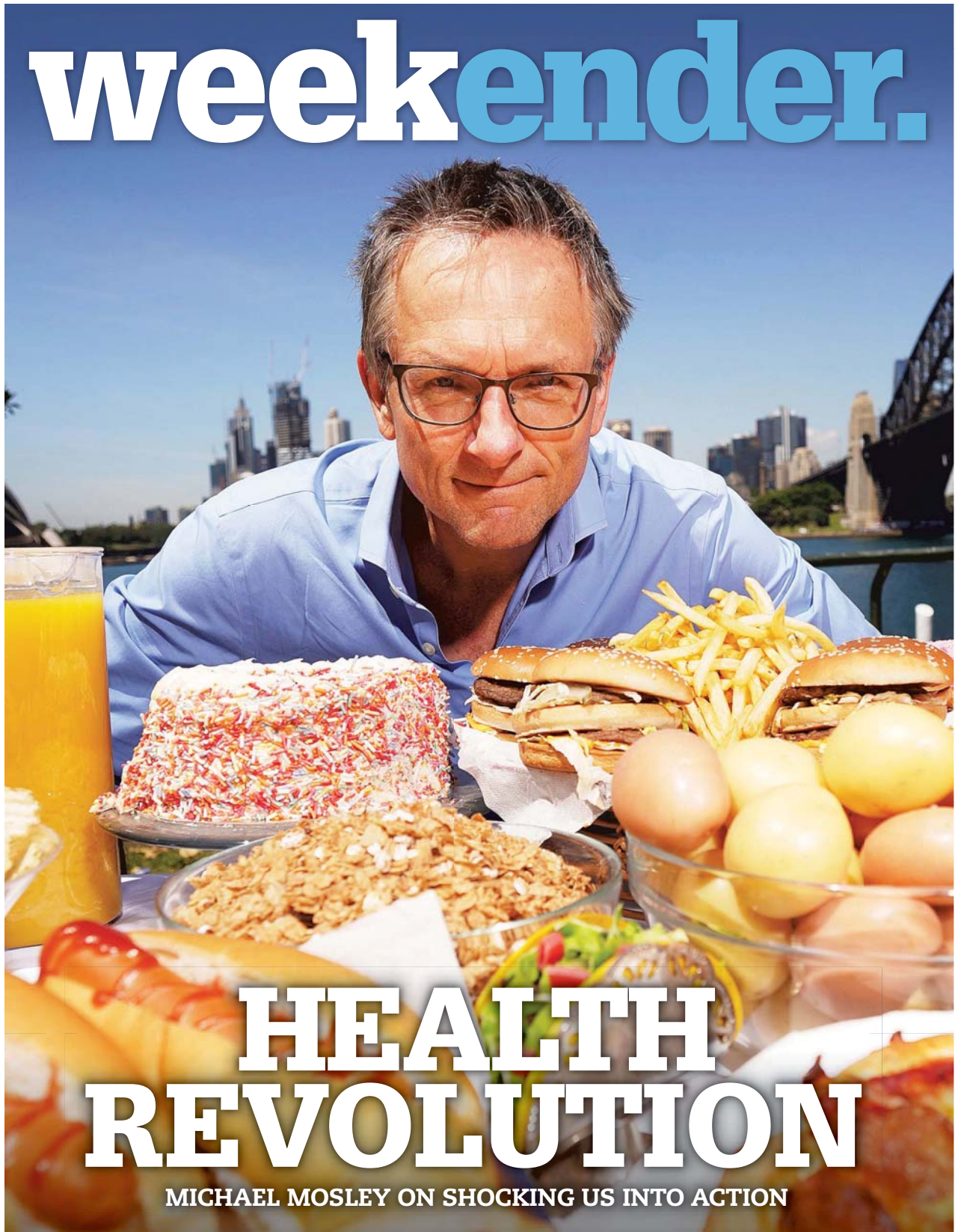
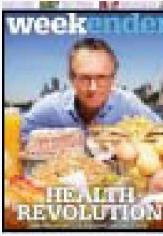


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Are you ready for a health revolution?

Michael Mosley is back in Australia to tackle type 2 diabetes, the nation's fastest growing chronic disease, writes KAREN HARDY

Michael Mosley isn't afraid to use himself as a guinea pig. Over the years he's swallowed tape worms, infected himself with malaria, tried to cure his insomnia with sleep experiments and gone caving even though he suffers from claustrophobia. He even volunteered for COVID vaccine trials early in the pandemic and was disappointed when Oxford University, his alma mater, knocked him back.

Mosley's willingness to experiment on himself started back in 2012, when a routine blood test revealed he had type 2 diabetes. He was in his mid-50s, and didn't consider himself overweight. Sure, he was carrying a bit of weight around his middle, "but I thought I looked pretty good for a bloke my age", he says. The test results shocked him into action.

The doctor in him went to work and the science was telling him his diabetes could be reversed. Rather than start medication, as is often suggested, he started with intermittent fasting. In eight weeks, he lost nine kilograms and his blood sugar levels went back to normal.

At 64, Mosley is the picture of health. Which is why, he admits, both he and his wife, Dr Clare Bailey, weren't that keen for him to embark on this latest project.

The prevalence of type 2 diabetes has tripled in Australia in the past 30 years. The world's fastest growing chronic disease affects more than 1.2 million Australians, with another 2 million thought to be at risk. Australians with the condition face an increased risk of an early death, kidney

disease, blindness, stroke, heart attacks, and limb amputation. And knowing all this, Mosley is once again putting his money where his mouth is.

Quite literally here, because to kick off the television series *Australia's Health Revolution*, premiering on SBS on Wednesday, October 13, Mosley starts the experiment by following the "typical Australian diet" of ultra-processed foods, and within two weeks his blood sugar levels are back to pre-diabetic and his blood pressure is worryingly high.

Over the next eight weeks, condensed into a three-part series, Mosley is joined by eight everyday Australians who have also been diagnosed as diabetic or pre-diabetic as they undergo diet and lifestyle changes to see if they can improve their health.

"I was really shocked by how quickly my weight, blood pressure and blood sugar levels rose when I started eating far more ultra-processed foods, the sort of diet many Australians follow," Mosley says.

"I want to show people simple ways we can all improve our health, and that every bit counts. I hope people are surprised and perhaps alarmed when they watch this show - I want it to challenge what you think you know about food and health, and I hope it illustrates just how deadly increased blood sugars can be. But also, how we can beat it."

Much of the series is shot in outback Western Australia. Indigenous Australians are almost three times as likely to have diabetes, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and people from outer regional and remote areas are also more at risk. Among the eight people are proud Yindjibarndi sisters from the Pilbara area, Lyn and Marion Cheedy. They're caring for big families, money is tight, and their health is already compromised, but from the start you're cheering for them - for all the participants.

When Marion starts flirting with exercise



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physiologist Ray Kelly, who is teaming up with Mosley for this challenge, it's a highlight of the first episode. She used to love dancing and she's keen to dance with Kelly, "to twist with Ray at Naidoc", if she can improve her lifestyle.

Kelly is a Gomeri man and has focused his research on the reversal of type 2 diabetes in the indigenous community, running programs such as Too Deadly for Diabetes. He plays a crucial role in the transformations, highlighting the importance of movement and exercise alongside diet changes.

In addition to *Australia's Health Revolution*, SBS's NITV will air a suite of supportive programming that explores the type 2 diabetes epidemic in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. On October 13 on *Living Black*, Karla Grant speaks with Mosley about what fired his passion to take the fight against type 2 diabetes globally and gets the answers on why the disease is so prolific in Indigenous communities. On October 20, she interviews Kelly, exploring the hurdles he faced in his journey to become an exercise physiologist, and how he's using his knowledge to aid communities.

Another place they visit is Canberra. Filming in early December 2020, they set up a tent on the lawns outside Parliament House and invited politicians to have their metabolic health tested. Bill Shorten and Jacqui Lambie came forward, among others.

Mosley recognises that while change can happen at the grassroots level, if it's supported from above, via legislation and government guidelines, the results are even better.

The national cost of type 2 diabetes is more than \$20 billion a year, and while 45 countries around the world have introduced a sugar tax, Australia is not one of them. In episode one, it's horrifying watching a National Press Club speech by 2020 Australian of the Year, eye surgeon Dr James Meucke, which ruffled feathers as he suggested peak bodies were not listening to the research and acknowledging the role lifestyle changes could make in the treatment of the disease.

But Mosley assures me the peak bodies have since listened.

If there's anyone who can explain all the science and make it easy to understand, it's Mosley. I'll admit he's become something of a beacon during the pandemic. His book *COVID-19: What you need to know about the coronavirus and the race for the vaccine* (Simon and Schuster, \$19.99) was a very readable summary of the latest research, full of practical tips of how to keep our bodies in the best possible shape to fight the virus. His podcast *Just One Thing* is perfect company for a quick, brisk walk, as he explains one thing we can do to improve our wellbeing and overall health, from said quick, brisk walks to hot baths and cold showers.

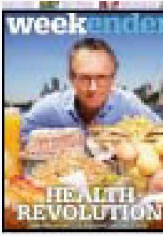
And while over the years, I have intermittently dabbled in intermittent fasting, I've found working from home the ideal opportunity to take it a little more seriously and have embarked on a health revolution of my own somewhat, trying his Fast 800 diet. I'm midway through 12 weeks of restricting my calories to 800 each day, only eating between noon and 8pm. It is hard work but its paying dividends.

I'm keen to find out how Mosley spends his day. Are his actions all for show? Does he really practise what he preaches, or only when the cameras are rolling? Unsurprisingly, he does seem to be following his own advice.

"I try to get up at the same time every morning because I know that's good for establishing sleep patterns," he starts. "Then I take the dog for an early morning walk because we know that early sunlight resets the internal clock."

He has a cold shower when he comes home and does press ups and squats before getting to work. Bailey is the cook in the house, and she's developed recipes for several cookbooks to accompany his methods. They eat a Mediterranean diet with oily fish, more vegetables, less carbohydrates.

"And I wear tight pants with a belt and while I weigh myself regularly, something like noticing where the notch on your belt is, is a very simple way to detect changes," he says. And that simple observation lends itself to the key of his success. It's not science, but it sure is backed up by a lot of it.



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Marion and Lyn Cheedy, with Michael Mosley and Ray Kelly. **Picture: SBS**



Bill Shorten was among the politicians who were tested. **Picture: SBS**



Exercise physiologist Ray Kelly and Michael Mosley in the Pilbara. **Picture: SBS**



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LOW-CARB SAUSAGE 'LASAGNE'

This easy low-carb 'lasagne' was created during a brilliant Zoom session when we had to come up with a dish using specific ingredients. These included sausages, tinned tomatoes and spinach. We skipped the starchy lasagne sheets and used layers of zucchini instead.

Ingredients

6 good-quality sausages (around 400g total weight)

2 medium onions, peeled and finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped

1 tsp dried oregano

1 400g can chopped tomatoes

250g young spinach leaves

2 medium zucchinis, trimmed and sliced lengthways into strips 3-4mm thick

good pinch ground nutmeg

200g full-fat crème fraiche

40g Parmesan, finely grated

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200C.

2. Place a shallow, flameproof casserole over a medium heat. Squeeze the sausages out of their skins and into the pan in small chunks. Add the onions and fry together, stirring, for 10 minutes, or until the onion is softened and the sausages are lightly browned. Add the garlic and oregano and cook for a few seconds. Tip the tomatoes into the pan and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring regularly, until thick.

3. Place the spinach in a colander in the sink and pour just-boiled water over the top until it softens. Otherwise, you can soften it in the microwave. Leave to stand until cool enough to handle, then squeeze the leaves to remove as much water as possible.

4. Remove the casserole from the heat and season well. Place the zucchini slices over the sausage mixture, then top with the spinach leaves.

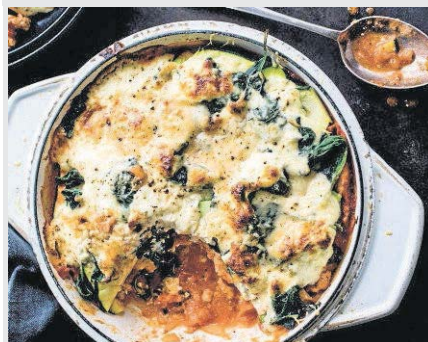
5. Stir the nutmeg into the crème fraiche and spread over the spinach - you don't need to be too neat. Sprinkle with the Parmesan and season with more ground black pepper. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until starting to brown.

6. Remove from the oven and serve with a large green salad.

Tip: Avoid cooking this dish for any longer than stated, as the zucchinis will release more liquid as they bake.

Serves 6 (379 cals per serve).

■ Extracted from *The Fast 800 Easy* by Dr Clare Bailey and Justine Pattison. Published by Simon & Schuster Australia, RRP \$35. Photography (c) Smith & Gilmour





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Michael Mosley and Ray Kelly came to Canberra with a message for our government. **Picture: SBS**