

GOOD TUCKER GOOD HEALTH

BACKGROUND

Wimmera Primary Care Partnership/PCP coordinated The Good Tucker Good Health project to address the priority areas of healthy eating, physical activity and social connection. The project aimed to provide an opportunity for Horsham Primary School students, parents/guardians and Aboriginal community members to physically contribute to the development and maintenance of a school fruit, vegetable and bush tucker garden.

The project specifically targets Aboriginal students at the Rasmussen Road campus because of the high incidence of social and economic disadvantage. The school is located on the northern edge of the City of Horsham and has a total enrolment of 90 students, 26 (29%) of whom identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. The majority of the target group live in public housing in single parent/guardian households. According to the current Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio-economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), the Horsham north region is shown as being in the first decile (most disadvantaged).

The project aims to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal children and their families in the Horsham area and establish and strengthen existing social networks by providing opportunities to learn about growing fresh food and the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise which can prevent the onset of chronic disease.

PARTNERS



METHOD

Wimmera PCP coordinated partner groups and assisted with funding applications, project delivery and evaluation. Information and support was provided to ensure work was carried out within an Aboriginal Health Promotion framework.

Wimmera PCP submitted the successful grant application to the Department of Health and Ageing for the Good Tucker Good Health project. They recruited the project partners and coordinated the community consultations and the formation of the steering committee.

In June 2012 an Action Plan was formulated and presented to the steering committee by Wimmera PCP in conjunction with the School Principal. Culturally appropriate material was distributed to families and a plan for the launch of the project was constructed. Wimmera PCP has helped to recruit garden experts to the project and has been involved in the evaluation of all stages of the project. Evaluation has taken a variety of forms including minutes of meetings, surveys, numbers at events, anecdotal responses from staff, students, parents and partners, and a photographic representation of progress.

OUTCOMES

- Key aspects of the project integrated into all areas of the school curriculum at all year levels – building knowledge and understanding of healthy eating, nutrition, aboriginal cultural education and environmental sustainability
- Students having “hands on experience” in the growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing of fresh seasonal food
- Partners working collaboratively to achieve project outcomes and build relationships
- Development of a sustainable garden (demonstrated by student activities including seed germination, plantings, harvesting, composting)
- Parent and community consultation and involvement (steering committee representation, garden plans, events, excursion, watering roster and working bees)
- Increased awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage

The garden has produced a positive focus for the school community and the partner organisations. The Aboriginal students at the school have developed a renewed sense of pride in their Aboriginality and the cultural understandings of the school community have been enhanced.

The project has provided a valuable platform for all partners to guide their work in health promotion.