

Healthy Eating Active Living in Yarra Ranges

In 2018, the Outer East PCP (OEPCP), supported Women's Health East, EACH, Inspiro and Eastern Health (EH), to come together, to explore collaboration and working toward integrating health promotion activity. Yarra Ranges Council was approached to join discussions, and a Partnership developed with mutual health priorities of Healthy Eating, Food Security, Physical Activity, and Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) identified as having potential to apply a collective impact approach.

The HAL Group (Healthy Eating Active Living) was established and core members, Inspiro Community Health Service, Yarra Ranges Council, Eastern Health, and Belgravia Leisure, with support from DHHS and OEPCP, chose food and physical activity as the shared focus areas. HAL group members collaborated on increasing water access and availability, and decreasing sugary sweetened beverages. This involved partners working in a variety of settings and sharing resources with an Inspiro staff member employed with Council in a Water in Sport Project, funded by VicHealth.

A collaboration with Deakin University and Monash University identified the benefits of a local food system focus for the Partnership; and the importance of community engagement and seeking local champions to support the work. The OEPCP and IEPCP also identified the need for leadership capacity building in food systems, delivering a series of workshops – and these concepts supported the group to take a more strategic approach to partnering, systems thinking, planning and delivery of actions.

The HAL Group changed focus in 2020 and transitioned to a more integrated strategic structure, the Shared Strategic Health Planning Partnership (SSHPP). The shared 4-year plan aligned to partner's Integrated Health Promotion Plans and the Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, with SSHPP overseeing three priority working groups (Yarra Ranges Food Connections,

Yarra Ranges Gender Equity Working Group and the Outer East Physical Activity Working Group). The new structure and plan formalised the collaborative commitment, and shared health and wellbeing direction and priorities for all the partnering organisations.

Key enablers to partnership success have included senior management support, and the secondment of a Health Promotion practitioner and dietitian from Inspiro into Council, sharing a backbone support function for the Partnership with Council and supporting capacity building in population health. This seconded role has supported communication between Council departments, Inspiro and partners. Eastern Health also provides leadership, health promotion and dietetics expertise to the Partnership. Having Council's Health and Wellbeing staff involved at the strategic level has enabled better understanding of an integrated systems approach to food, and increased buy-in, to include the Council's Sustainability team, who also have an interest in supporting healthy and sustainable food systems.

Branding for the food systems work has been developed and, thanks to the OEPCP the Partnership gained some additional funding to build a website and to support further stakeholder engagement. They are seeking to grow the Partnership, and acknowledge that a shared approach to planning, and agreed model for coordination and cooperation, maximises the potential effectiveness of allocation of health and wellbeing resources across the outer east catchment, and supports high-level planning, and advocacy to improve community outcomes. ●

<https://oepcp.org.au/portals/food-security/>

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“There is collective trust and willingness to move together in a new direction.’ It is about the people around the table, attitude, their skills, professionalism and mutual respect.’ Partners share a high level of trust and a ‘genuine desire to make a difference’ and have developed a common understanding of ‘what it takes and what really has to be put in’ – a ‘very solid investment of commitment’ to make the partnership effort succeed.

Partners

Project highlights

A strong, strategic collaboration between Council and health partners taking a food systems approach to improve health and wellbeing in Yarra Ranges Shire.

Key outcomes

- Alignment of the Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan and Integrated Health Promotion Plans
- Capacity Building of partners in health promotion and dietetics
- Co-location of a community health champion into local government to support the partnership.