



EVALUATION REPORT
Healthy Club Canteens Project

2008 - 2010

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Executive summary

The *Healthy Club Canteens* project was a pilot program established to identify ways in which community sporting clubs could provide a range of healthy food options in their canteens or food outlets.

The project spanned two years, initially with six clubs in two Local Government Areas, then expanding to seventeen clubs and five leisure centres across five Local Government Areas in the second year.

It stemmed from an understanding that sports clubs actively promote one of the key drivers of good health – physical activity – and that as a setting, community sporting clubs can be an important partner in other preventative health measures.

The *Healthy Club Canteens* project worked with clubs to understand the opportunities and barriers to providing healthy eating options, and offered resources and advice to support them in making change. It did not set out to eliminate all unhealthy choices from club menus, but to increase the proportion of healthy food choices available to players, officials and spectators at community sport.

This document outlines the approach taken over the life of the project, and reports on the outcomes.

In a snapshot, the project found that

- There is a willingness to make change in many clubs – and when that attitude is present in the canteen manager significant change is possible;
- Many of the participating clubs now see healthy eating as more important than at the start of the project;
- There is quite low understanding in many clubs about what is healthy and unhealthy, and clubs frequently underestimate the proportion of unhealthy choices on their menus;
- Providing the right information in the right form was important in making change - particularly the development of detailed action plans tailored to the club's circumstances;
- It is possible to improve the proportion of healthy foods offered by clubs without reducing customer demand, or significantly increasing the workload for volunteers.
- Anecdotally, it appeared that increasing healthy options did not adversely affect the financial viability of club canteens.

A range of tools and resources were created through the project, including a format for action planning, surveys, and workshop discussion guides. These are provided as appendices with this report. The detailed information kit is also available in PDF form as a companion to this report.

The clubs that participated showed a definite interest in supporting preventative health interventions, and this is backed up by recent VicHealth attitudinal research. However there is heavy reliance on the income generated from their canteens and clubs are unlikely to remove junk food entirely from their menus without some way of replacing that income.

Interventions like the *Healthy Club Canteens* project can definitely assist in improving the health choices in community clubs until such time as this financial barrier can be overcome.

Origins of the project

The *Healthy Club Canteens* project emerged from VicHealth's *Official Supporter* program.

This social marketing campaign began in 2004 with street stencils containing quirky messages promoting walking, cycling, active play and connection with others in local neighbourhoods.

Phase 2 of the *Official Supporter* was rolled out in 2007 and 2008. This phase involved developing, testing, distributing and evaluating marketing materials in cricket, football (soccer), Australian Rules football, basketball and netball club environments.

In each case, the materials produced reflected the type of club being targeted, highlighting three or four healthy choices that players, spectators and club officials could make: including alcohol consumption, sun protection, smoking, appropriate behaviour on and off the field, and eating habits.

Evaluation of phase two indicated that clubs were keen to support their members to make healthy eating choices. However, it also revealed that clubs felt constrained in their ability to provide those choices because of time, cost, equipment, volunteer workers' skills and ability and their perceptions of the expectations of their customers (that is, players, officials and supporters).

This led to a shift in focus for the program – from influencing attitudinal and promoting behaviour change through the use of marketing materials, to creating detailed information and support materials that would provide a 'roadmap' for clubs wanting to offer healthier food options.

That shift became the *Healthy Club Canteens* project, which was designed to highlight the range of healthy, attractive choices that canteens could provide, using the time, skills and equipment they have available.

It focused on identifying healthy choices that would be popular with customers and maintain the profit margins canteens need to remain viable.

Project structure

The *Healthy Club Canteens* project proceeded in two stages.

Stage one ran over the summer of 2008/2009. It involved six sports clubs across two local government areas (Swan Hill in the state's north-west, and Kingston, in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs).

Stage two ran from winter 2009, wrapping up in June 2010. This stage was expanded to include three further local government areas: Boroondara (Melbourne east), Hume (Melbourne north) and Ballarat (regional city in central Victoria). It involved the original six sports clubs from stage one, and added a leisure centre in each of the five municipalities and a further ten clubs.

Project management

Both stages of the *Healthy Club Canteens* project were managed by The Big Picture Strategic Services. This project management role involved

- Designing the program, including researching the expectations of clubs and leisure centres.
- Researching, developing and distributing information to support the clubs' and leisure centres' participation in the project.
- Recruiting clubs and leisure centres with the assistance of the council in each Local Government Area.
- Researching the current practices and attitudes towards healthy choices of each club and leisure centre.

- Working with each club and leisure centre to identify possible changes, and gaining their agreement about what changes would be made.
- Encouraging, supporting and following up clubs and leisure centres as they made change.
- Evaluating the level of change made by each club and leisure centre, and the level of change achieved across the board.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the program design.
- Preparing this final report.

Project goals and outputs

Stage one

Aim: To assist sports clubs to provide a range of healthy food options in their canteens (food outlets) at affordable prices.

Outputs: Development of an agreed work-plan for the project.

Analysis of food options currently provided at sports club canteens including relevant literature report.

Identification of healthy options (easy and suitable for preparation and sale) which present a reasonable profit margin.

Pilot of healthy options in canteens in two local councils (one metropolitan and one regional).

Development of information materials for use in a range of clubs and sporting codes.

Analysis completed and summary report produced (delivered to VicHealth in July 2009).

Stage two

Aim: To assist sports clubs and leisure centres to provide a range of healthy food options in their canteens (food outlets) at prices those customers can afford, and that also deliver a reasonable profit to the outlet.

Outputs: Identification of healthy options (easy and suitable for preparation and sale) which present a reasonable profit margin.

Review and update of *Healthy Club Canteens* information materials, incorporating learnings from stage one and addressing the wider target audience of stage one.

Pilot of healthy options in canteens and leisure centres across five local government areas (Ballarat, Boroondara, Hume, Kingston, Swan Hill).

Involvement of 12 new clubs and five leisure centres, including:

Three winter clubs in each of Swan Hill, Kingston, Ballarat and Boroondara;

One leisure centre in each of Swan Hill, Kingston, Boroondara, Ballarat and Hume.

Continuation of involvement of the 6 clubs from stage one.

Provide regular updates to a bi-monthly meeting of the Steering Committee.

Analysis completed and report produced.

Principles and approach

One of the first actions in the project was to undertake desktop research to better understand the opportunities to influence in a sporting club setting.

While there was no published data about healthy food programs in sports club settings available at the time, a number of research reports informed the framework developed to guide the *Healthy Club Canteens* project.

These included an evaluation report of a project undertaken by Deakin University to increase healthy options in leisure centres¹, a literature review commissioned by the City of Kingston² and the extensive work with school canteens undertaken in most Australian states.

Healthy Canteens Program Framework

Key principles

| Principle | Practice |
|---|---|
| Empowerment | <p>Use tools, information, guidance and support rather than direct intervention so that sporting clubs are empowered to make the shift to providing healthier food options in their canteens.</p> <p>The principles of community building will be used through this project – harnessing collective participation to create change, encouraging the creation of local solutions to local problems, creating capacity and engendering ownership of the project by sporting clubs involved.</p> |
| Involve the community and facilitate local networking | <p>Work directly with sporting clubs through the agency of local councils.</p> <p>Bring clubs of all sports together in their local area, and suggest opportunities for them to work together to improve the provision of healthier options through their canteens.</p> <p>Consideration will also be given to developing a ‘healthy club canteen committee’ comprising multiple club representatives in each pilot area.</p> |
| Addressing the broader determinants of health | <p>Work within a sporting environment, which indicates that the target group already takes part in some physical activity, to encourage other health-promoting choices, including healthy eating.</p> |
| Reducing social inequities and injustice | <p>Pilot the project in a range of different supporting clubs in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria in order to improve the access of all Victorians to healthy eating messages and practices.</p> |

¹ Swinburn, B. and Gleeson, E. *Go For Your Life Healthy and Active Choices*, WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention, Deakin University, August 2008.

² *Healthy Food Healthy Clubs*, City of Kingston, January 2008

Key principles

| <i>Principle</i> | Practice |
|---|---|
| Facilitate inter-sectoral collaboration | <p>Work with council sports and recreation staff to increase the effectiveness of this program.</p> <p>If possible, collaborate with other services, such as local health providers, to boost the effectiveness and sustainability of the program.</p> |
| Address underlying conditions as well as immediate needs | <p>Sporting clubs frequently rely on canteen profits to fund other club activities. This need must be considered and supported in the rollout of the program.</p> <p>Sporting clubs also have a role to play in encouraging people to live healthy, active lives, and providing healthy alternatives at club canteens is a key element in this.</p> |
| Involve good organisational learning and good management | <p>The development of this project will be guided by research into the most effective ways of encouraging healthy eating and health promotion generally.</p> <p>This project will also be guided by the projects to encourage healthy options in canteens (including school canteens) in Australia and around the world.</p> |
| Evaluate process, impacts, outcomes, participation and sustainability | <p>This project puts a strong emphasis on evaluation and research.</p> <p>As well as research into the best way of promoting healthy options, the project will also entail in-depth primary research (including a survey and focus groups) with sporting clubs.</p> <p>The pilot will be continually evaluated and refined as it is rolled out, and will be carefully evaluated once it is complete.</p> |
| Other guidelines and principles | <p>Ottawa Charter</p> <p>Develop personal skills to enable individuals to take informed action for health.</p> <p>Strengthen community action for health.</p> <p>Create supportive environments where people live, work and play, that offer protection from threats to health and enable people to lead healthy lives.</p> <p>Build public health policy in all sectors, so there is an explicit concern for the achievement of population health outcomes.</p> <p>Jakarta Declaration</p> <p>Promoting social responsibilities for health.</p> <p>Increasing investments in health development.</p> <p>Consolidating and expanding partnerships for health.</p> <p>Increasing community capacity and empowering the individual.</p> <p>Securing an infrastructure for health promotion.</p> |

Approach

| <i>Principle</i> | Practice |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Policy-based | <p>Research into the most effective methods of encouraging healthier options in sporting clubs reveals that clubs with a written healthy food policy are significantly more likely to provide at least one healthy food choice...Clubs that are supported and provided with sample policies and incentives have been found to be most likely to adopt policy changes.</p> <p>This project will include support and information to help develop and adopt healthy eating policies.</p> |
| Supportive resources | <p>Providing supportive resources increases the success of projects that focus on promoting healthier options.</p> <p>As part of this project, a suite of information which includes detailed suggestions for making the shift to a healthier menu, will be developed and distributed to clubs.</p> |
| Training and education | <p>Good training and education is a key component of successful health promotion campaigns.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to developing a half-day training and education workshop for participants in the pilot. This workshop would likely follow the structure of the pilot materials and information.</p> |
| Promotional materials | <p>Uptake of healthy options could be boosted by the use of good promotional materials, outlining both the club's healthy eating policy and the options available.</p> <p>Promotional materials including letters to members, posters, sample menus and price lists, will be developed for this project.</p> |
| Broad club involvement | <p>Such projects were more likely to be successful in clubs that had a broad level of support for health promotion principles.</p> <p>This project will fulfil that need by encouraging the main contact in clubs (such as the canteen manager) to work with the broader club committee to develop and implement changes and policies.</p> |
| Focus on club, not associations | <p>Research indicates that sporting club health promotion is most effective when targeted directly at clubs, rather than through the agency of sporting associations.</p> <p>Clubs will be directly targeted in this project.</p> |
| Encouraging participation | <p>Evaluation conducted by a project to create healthy football stadiums³ indicates that the following approaches help to encourage participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make a clear business case in which there are tangible gains take a 'what we can do for you' approach link healthy objectives with the club's objectives use language that the clubs themselves use, not health or bureaucratic language invest lots of time in facilitation and support, to help sustain results for the longer term highlight evidence of good practice to provide practical support to clubs. <p>These approaches will be adopted as far as possible in this project.</p> |

3. <http://www.heartofmersey.org.uk/healthystadia>

Program outline

The following table details the timing of key activities through both stages of the project.

| <i>When</i> | What |
|---------------------------|---|
| STAGE ONE | |
| August 2008 | Meetings with Swan Hill and Kingston councils Desktop research Develop program framework |
| September – October 2008 | Online and telephone survey of clubs (refer Appendix One for survey) Drafting information kit |
| November 2008 | Focus groups with clubs in Kingston and Swan Hill (refer Appendix Two for focus group discussion guide) Analysis of surveys and focus group findings |
| December 2008 | Call for Expressions of Interest to participate in pilot program (\$1500 grant offered) Review and finalise information kit |
| January 2009 | Six clubs contracted to participate in pilot |
| February – May 2009 | Follow up with clubs for implementation of program |
| June 2009 | Review and analyse outcomes of initial pilot |
| <i>When</i> | What |
| STAGE TWO | |
| July 2009 | Project extended for twelve months Meetings with Hume, Boroondara and Ballarat Councils Engagement of ten new clubs and five leisure centres for stage two |
| August 2009 | Review and information kit with feedback from Stage One clubs Healthy eating workshops conducted with contracted clubs and leisure centres in Hume, Boroondara and Ballarat refer to Appendix Three for workshop discussion guide) |
| September 2009 | Action plans developed for each club/leisure centre from workshops (refer to Appendix Four for sample action plan) |
| October 2009 - April 2010 | Follow up with clubs and leisure centres for implementation of program |
| May – July 2010 | Evaluation (meetings and survey) |
| August – September 2010 | Prepare final report |

Research

CLUB SURVEYS

Once the desktop research to inform the program framework was complete, it became apparent that we needed to build a deeper understanding of the current situation in local clubs. The focus was on getting a better understanding of:

- How club canteens operate
- What they're serving, what's popular and what's profitable
- Demands on volunteers
- What would be involved in making a change to healthier menus.

In September 2008 a survey (see Appendix One) was administered online, where club contacts had email contact addresses, and by telephone where internet access was not easy (very few of the rural clubs were able to access the online survey).

49 respondents completed part of the survey, with 39 completing all questions. The lowest response was to the question about finances – our later work showed that detailed financial analysis is not something many clubs have ready access to.

Clubs identified the following as the biggest challenges to stocking healthy foods as

- Buying and storing healthy food in canteens that may only operate once or twice a month
- Current demands on volunteer labour - how to introduce healthier choices without creating an additional load on volunteers
- How to introduce and create demand for healthy choices – especially as some of the least healthy choices are the most popular and profitable items
- How to introduce a wider range of healthy choices while maintaining (or better yet, increasing) the current profit levels.

Storage, budgeting, ordering and menu selection were considered less of a challenge.

In reviewing the food stocked by club canteens, nearly all the most commonly stocked, most profitable and most popular foods were 'red' (i.e. low nutritional value, high in sugar, fat and/or salt).

It was also identified that healthy foods were much more likely to have been locally produced.

FOCUS GROUPS

Once the surveys were complete, it was important to test the findings with clubs in more detail, communicate and validate the survey results, and build a stronger insight into how club canteens operate.

Clubs were invited to participate in a focus group in both Local Government Areas in early November 2008. The discussion guide for these focus groups can be found at Appendix Two.

The discussions affirmed the findings of the research, and highlighted some differences between rural and metropolitan clubs.

In the rural focus group, clubs were initially more resistant to the idea of change, but as discussion progressed, began to see opportunities and share ideas about possible areas for change.

In the metropolitan focus group there seemed to be more awareness of the capacity of clubs to influence health choices, and a deeper understanding of what is healthy or not healthy. On the other hand, these participants held a greater expectation that someone (council, state government etc) would make the change or support them in making change.

It was clear from the discussions at the workshops that there was a higher anxiety that canteen income would be negatively impacted by participation in a healthy choices pilot program than had been

identified in the survey. This fear was addressed by the introduction of a grant for participating clubs, to offset any possible impact on their financial bottom line.

The workshops also helped to lay the groundwork for participation in the pilot program and influenced the tone and style of the information materials produced to support clubs.

Information manual

The Healthy Eating information kit was a critical resource for the project, and a vital part of the change program.

It addressed the purpose of *Healthy Club Canteens* project, introduced concepts and guidelines for healthy eating, outlined areas where change is possible, provided tools to help clubs make and measure their change, and provided some inspiration with a range of healthy recipes.

The style and tone of the kit was inviting, colourful, and casual- and deliberately pitched towards non-professional food service volunteers.

Differences between Stage one and Stage two

While the program remained fundamentally unchanged, the project team took on board some of the lessons and observations from the first stage when rolling out Stage two.

- It was noted that the Stage one clubs that had made most significant change to date were those where the canteen manager was engaged from the beginning. In Stage two we required the clubs to get endorsement and 'buy in' from the canteen manager at the time of contracting.
- Potential Stage two clubs and leisure centres were identified by councils, rather than going through the long Expression of Interest process. While clubs still had the opportunity to indicate a willingness to participate, this helped to fast-track the engagement process.
- In Stage one, after the initial meetings, the clubs were left to explore the content in the information kit and consider how they might use it. We found that the majority of clubs did not fully review the materials or complete the supplied worksheets. It was clear that while the content was ultimately regarded as valuable, the 'density' of the material was possibly a bit intimidating for some clubs.

In the second phase, this was addressed by holding an initial workshop, which worked through the principles of healthy eating, completed the worksheets and started the process of thinking through targets for the proportion of healthy/unhealthy foods and what changes could possibly be made.

- The final shift in focus was the development of clear action plans following these workshop discussions by the project team. This enabled us to create an aspirational plan, that reflected the targets and ideas generated by them in the workshop and drew on our knowledge from the research and practices of other clubs and organisations. (See Appendix Four for a sample action plan.)
- In the second phase, there was less direct and face-to-face contact with clubs - this was primarily because the action planning process replaced the need for meetings designed to 'nudge' along change.

Participating clubs and leisure centres

| Name | Stage | Code | LGA | Season | Operational frequency | Structure |
|------------------------------------|-------|----------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Ashburton Recreation Centre | 2 | Leisure centre | Boroondara | Year round | Daily | Paid staff |
| Ballarat Aquatic Centre | 2 | Leisure centre | Ballarat | Year round | Daily | Paid staff |
| Ballarat Netball Association | 2 | Netball | Ballarat | Year round | Up to 4 x week | Volunteers |
| Ballarat Regional Athletics Centre | 2 | Athletics | Ballarat | Summer | Up to 2 x week | Volunteers |
| Bentleigh Greens Soccer Club | 1 & 2 | Soccer | Kingston | Winter | Up to 2 x week | Contract operator |
| Broadmeadows Leisure Centre | 2 | Leisure centre | Hume | Year round | Daily | Paid staff |
| Camberwell Lacrosse Club | 2 | Lacrosse | Boroondara | Winter | Up to 4 x week | Volunteers |
| Carnegie United Cricket Club | 1 & 2 | Cricket | Kingston | Summer | Up to 2 x fortnight | Volunteers |
| Chelsea District Netball Assoc. | 1 & 2 | Netball | Kingston | Year round | Up to 2 x week | Paid staff |
| Cheltenham Baseball Club | 2 | Baseball | Kingston | Winter | 3 – 4 x week | Paid staff |
| Greenvale Football Club | 2 | AFL | Hume | Winter | Up to 2 x fortnight | Volunteers |
| Hume United Soccer Club | 2 | Soccer | Hume | Winter | Up to 2 x fortnight | Volunteers |
| Mordialloc Football Club | 2 | AFL | Kingston | Winter | Up to 3 x week | Volunteers |
| North Balwyn Baseball Club | 2 | Baseball | Boroondara | Winter | Up to 3 x week | Volunteers |
| Nyah Nyah West Football Club | 2 | AFL | Swan Hill | Winter | Up to 2 x fortnight | Volunteers |
| Swan Hill Basketball Centre | 2 | Basketball | Swan Hill | Year round | Up to 4 x week | Contract operator |
| Swan Hill Bowls Club | 1 & 2 | Bowls | Swan Hill | Year round | Up to 5 x week | Volunteers |
| Swan Hill Jockey Club | 2 | Horse racing | Swan Hill | Year round | Monthly | Contract operator |
| Swan Hill Leisure Centre | 2 | Leisure Centre | Swan Hill | Year round | Daily | Paid staff |
| Swan Hill Little Athletics | 1 & 2 | Athletics | Swan Hill | Summer | Weekly | Volunteers |
| Swan Hill Speedway | 1 & 2 | Motor racing | Swan Hill | Summer | Monthly | Volunteers |
| Waves | 2 | Leisure centre | Kingston | Year round | Daily | Contract operator |

NOTE: Of the twenty-two clubs and leisure centres initially engaged in the program, five withdrew because their circumstances had changed or because the canteen manager/s declined to participate.

The evaluation of this program focused on

- The level of change achieved by the clubs as a result of their participation
- The effectiveness of the design of the program as observed by the clubs and leisure centres involved.

The methods of collecting data are outlined below.

Meetings with club and leisure centre staff and volunteers

To understand the level of change achieved through the program, The Big Picture Strategic Services met with all clubs and leisure centres at intervals through the program's life.

These meetings initially served the purpose of maintaining contact with clubs and leisure centres, and offering them guidance or advice where required.

However, as the program progressed, the meetings focused more strongly on the change being achieved, and opportunities to make further change. The action plans developed at the start of the program were used to guide these discussions.

By the final months of the program, these meetings were focusing almost exclusively on evaluating the changes made by clubs and leisure centres. During visits to clubs and leisure centres The Big Picture was also observing operations in the canteens and kitchens. The summary of the changes achieved is included at Appendix Six.

Email and phone contact with club and leisure centre staff and volunteers

Between meetings, contact with clubs and leisure centres was maintained by email and phone. From time to time, these emails and conversations involved specific questions about actions achieved, guided by the action plans.

Survey

The primary tool used to collect information on the effectiveness of the program design was a survey (attached at Appendix Five).

Where possible, a link to the survey was emailed to clubs and leisure centres, who then responded through the Survey Monkey online tool. The survey was also conducted over the phone or by mail with those clubs that were not internet users.

Every club that completed the program responded to the survey. The survey results and analysis are included in the following section.

Survey results

Reasons for taking part

Each of the 17 clubs and centres that completed the program were asked why they took part in the program.

Of these, 12 indicated that they wanted to increase the healthy choices available in their canteens. A further three offered comments.

- 'We wanted to change certain aspects in our eating habits and at the same time receive a grant to promote our juniors'.
- 'We wanted to increase the healthy options available in our canteen and we wanted to receive the grant for taking part'.
- 'Thought it would be a good process to see what we could improve on and that it would be interesting.'

Only one club indicated that they only took part because of the grant – and interestingly, this club was one of the most successful in making change.

Changes in attitude

The survey also asked whether the club or centre's attitudes towards healthy eating had changed as a result of their involvement in the program.

Eleven indicated that they now see healthy eating as more important than they did before. A further six indicated that they still believe that healthy eating is important (that is, that they thought so before the program began, and still think so).

Two comments were offered.

- 'We are excited about being involved in promoting healthy eating and to assist in reducing obesity and improving health and well being'.
- 'It is hard trying to convince players'.

Menu options at start of program

Almost half of the clubs and centres (8 in total) responding to the survey indicated that they offered 'very few' healthy choices before the program. A further three said they offered a fairly even mix of healthy and unhealthy choices. Both of these results were supported by our initial analysis of their menus.

However, of the five that responded that their menus before the program were 'generally healthy, with a few unhealthy choices', at least three seemed to have underestimated the high proportion of unhealthy choices revealed by our initial menu analysis.

One club indicated that their menu was 'very unhealthy' before the program began.

Menu options at end of program

Of the 17 clubs and centres that finished the program, 11 indicated that they now have 'more healthy choices and fewer unhealthy choices'. A further five believe that they now have about the same number of unhealthy choices, but more healthy choices.

One club indicated that they now have about the same range of healthy choices, but fewer unhealthy options.

Achievements against expectations

Nine of the 17 clubs and centres indicated that they achieved about what they expected on joining the program. A further seven said they achieved more than they expected, and only one achieved less than expected.

Success factors

Each club and centre was asked what factors were most helpful to them in making change through the program.

- 16 selected 'having a clear action plan to follow'.
- 14 selected 'having good information about what healthy choices are'.
- Nine selected 'understanding why healthy choices are a good thing for our club'.
- Eight selected 'having the club support our efforts to make change'.
- Six selected 'the willingness of our customers to buy healthy choices'.
- Six indicated that 'The grant meant we didn't have to worry about profit while we made change'.

(NB: These numbers do not add up to 17, because clubs could select multiple responses).

Barriers to change

Clubs and centres were also asked to indicate which factors made it most difficult for them to make change (again, making multiple choices).

- Seven indicated that they didn't have 'the storage or preparation space to support healthy choices'.
- Four indicated that 'customers didn't buy the healthy choices we offered'.
- Two indicated that 'the changes we made reduced our profits'.
- Two indicated that they had 'a lot of stock of unhealthy choices' before they started.
- Two indicated that 'there was too much work involved in making change'.
- One indicated that they didn't get enough information or support from the project.
- One indicated that a key person within the club made it difficult to make change.

Some people also offered comments in response to this question.

- 'We had no problems in making changes'.
- 'Wasn't difficult only had to change my attitude'.
- 'So far it has not been difficult'.
- '[They didn't buy] AT FIRST'.
- 'A combination of patrons still wanting some of the unhealthy options and the higher costs of purchasing and preparing fresh food created some boundaries'.

Value of information, resources and support

Clubs and centres were asked to rate the value of various forms of support provided to them through the program. (NB: One club exited the survey at this point.)

- Sixteen of the seventeen clubs and centres indicated that they found the **initial workshop** either 'helpful' (eight responses) or 'very helpful' (eight clubs).
- Sixteen of the seventeen said they found the **information kit** either 'helpful' (eight responses) or 'very helpful' (eight clubs).
- Fourteen found the **tailored action plan** 'helpful' (seven) or 'very helpful' (seven). Two found it neither helpful nor unhelpful.
- Eleven found the **face to face meetings** 'very helpful', and a further four found them 'helpful'. One found them neither helpful nor unhelpful.
- Eight found the **phone support** offered 'very helpful', five found it 'helpful' and three found it neither helpful nor unhelpful.

One club offered a comment in response to this question: 'Fantastic people on hand and great explanation.'

Value of action plan

Each of the clubs and centres was asked whether the action plan created for them was achievable, realistic and tailored to their own situation. Twelve said it was both achievable and realistic, and four didn't know. Fourteen said it was tailored to their situation, and two didn't know.

One club noted that 'it is extremely difficult when some people don't value the healthy options choice. But if that's all that's offered – their choices of range is healthy only.'

Amount of support offered

Each respondent was asked to indicate whether The Big Picture Strategic Services offered them more or less support than they needed, or exactly the right amount.

Fourteen said that they were offered 'exactly the right amount of information, resources and contact'.

Two said they were offered more information, resources and contact than they needed.

Increasing the rate of change

Clubs and centres were asked to indicate what might have helped them make more change, had they been available. Respondents could choose multiple items.

- Five indicated that they might have made more change if they'd had more time.
- Five indicated that they might have made more change if they'd had more support within the club.
- Four thought more money might have led to more change.
- One indicated that they would have made more change with more detailed information, both about how to make change, and about what change could be made ⁴.

Four people offered comments in response to this question.

- 'More constant clientele as all schools are different' (from a club that rents its premises out to schools to use for sports days, as well as running club activities).
- 'We did well with what we did'.
- 'All was OK'.
- 'New facility space and working environment'.

Future participation

Clubs and centres were asked whether, on the basis of their experience of this program, they would take part in a similar program in the future.

Fifteen of the sixteen respondents to this question said that they definitely would, and one said maybe.

Four comments were also received for this question.

- 'The project has been exceptional in initiating change but I feel the contact person for the club should have been the canteen coordinator'. (NB: This comment was from a stage 1 club – the contact was shifted to the canteen coordinator in stage 2).
- 'Information was very good'.
- 'The only thing that I found, especially at first, was that I thought it was a lot to ask of volunteers who run/coordinate the canteen as it was more work for them as a volunteer. I can see that if you are prepared to have a go and be open minded the reward and not just in \$\$\$\$ sense can be fulfilled and worth the extra bit of time and organisation'.
- 'Learning and gaining information from projects like this to better the services we can provide our patrons and educate our staff is highly valuable.'

Other comments

Finally, clubs and centres were asked whether they wanted to make any further comment on the program or their involvement. Ten did.

- 'Is good but you have to follow it. Is good for the health of the kids.'
- 'I found the project was helpful and we had positive feedback from most of our members.'
- 'At first I thought it was easy way to make money for the club but soon realised that we didn't have

4. This club also indicated that they did not have information or support from the project to make change, and is one of the clubs that didn't know whether the action plan prepared for the club was achievable, realistic or tailored. The respondent from this club also indicated that they found the workshop, information kit, action plan and meetings provided through the program 'helpful'. Interestingly, this club was visited by the project team more times than any other club in the program.

any healthy choices for our customers and after implementing the program I could see that it was warranted. Who would have thought that people at speedway would eat corn and fruit salad?????'

- 'Our club does not operate on a daily basis as schools are mostly once per year. Therefore different scenarios every day schools attend.'
- 'This project enabled us to change the attitudes of the juniors who would normally have hamburgers and chips and cokes to sandwiches and fruit drinks and water and less of the fatty foods.'
- 'We appreciated the grant and the information that was fed to myself and relayed to other team members. People are becoming acceptable to change, if healthy choice is all you offer, it makes things easier. We are still working towards a full range of healthy choices. Things are getting better.'
- 'I think this project has a great deal to offer all sporting clubs – ours had the benefit of a canteen manager who was involved with the food industry and found it easy to change the menu. Other clubs rely totally on several volunteers which would possibly mean the project should be taken to them rather than the other way around. We have had a good response from parents and even the older members (30+) are enjoying the soup and sweetcorn. Thanks again.'
- 'Congratulations to you for your patience and support.'
- 'The information was really interesting and useful.'
- 'Thank you for the well run and educational information session at the start of the project. I need to also extend my apologies to you for consistently responding late to your requests! Despite this you were still very patient and helpful!'

Analysis of results

Although the sample group is relatively small, the intensiveness and detailed approach of the program makes it possible to draw some general conclusions from the survey results.

Capitalising on goodwill and willingness to change

Both the survey results and our own observations indicate that this program was the right thing at the right time for the clubs and leisure centres involved. Some had already started to think about changing their menus – the program merely gave them the support they needed to decide what to do and how to do it.

The survey feedback also reveals that clubs' and centres' expectations of what they could achieve were met, and in more than a third of cases, exceeded.

Changing attitudes

A majority of those that took part – 11 out of 17 – now see healthy eating as more important than they did before. Most of the remainder already valued the importance of healthy foods.

This would indicate that the program has been highly effective in changing mindsets, albeit through an intensive program that reaches a limited number of people directly.

Further attitude change, or at least increased awareness, has likely been achieved among the patrons and customers of the canteens involved in the program (although this has not been measured).

Improving menus

Although the actual change achieved will be analysed later in this report Refer to Appendix Six, the club's own perception is that they achieved a great deal.

Where their perception differed from our analysis, it tended to be in the realm of where they started, rather than where they finished. That is, even after being shown the menu analysis, some clubs continued to underestimate the proportion of unhealthy choices on their menus.

Offering resources and support

The responses from clubs and centres clearly highlight the value of three of the approaches used in the program:

- The information kit provided to clubs was highly valued and regarded as very helpful. This is supported by the strong responses from clubs about the value of 'having good information about what healthy choices are' and 'understanding why healthy choices are a good thing for this club.'
- Responses to the survey also rated the initial workshop highly – and our own observation was that the addition of this workshop in the second stage was a key success factor with the clubs and centres in all five LGAs.
- Finally, clubs clearly appreciated being given clear, tailored advice and guidance on what to change in the form of the action plans. Everyone who responded to the question said that they valued 'having a clear action plan to follow,' and the action plan was rated as helpful or very helpful by all but two respondents. Twelve out of 16 people who responded to the relevant question said that the action plans developed were achievable and realistic, and 14 said they were tailored to their own situation.
- The face to face meetings were also seen as helpful by the clubs and centres – and certainly, our observation was that the biggest changes made by clubs and centres generally occurred shortly after we had met with them.
- While a few clubs indicated that more time, money or support within the club might have helped them make further change, most seemed satisfied with the change achieved within the program's parameters.
- Generally, the response of clubs would seem to indicate that the design of the program – plenty of information at the start both in workshop and written form, regular but not overly frequent meetings, and a clear action plan – was effective in supporting them to make the changes they achieved.

Offering money

As only three clubs indicated that they joined the program to get the grant (two through comments), and only four thought they may have made more change if they had had more money, it would seem that dollars are not essential to change.

Overcoming barriers

Clearly, one of the program's strongest successes was in overcoming the barriers to change that clubs and centres perceived before the program began. Our initial research (conducted in 2008) indicated that clubs in Kingston and Swan Hill felt that the biggest obstacles to changing their menus would be

- Getting customers to buy them
- The relative cost of (and profit in) healthy options
- Storage space
- Preparation time.

In fact, very few of the clubs and centres involved in the program indicated that these issues had in fact strongly limited their ability to make changes.

Meeting needs

15 of the 16 clubs that responded in full to the survey indicated that they would take part in a similar program again in the future. This finding clearly underscores the program's effectiveness in educating, informing and supporting clubs to make change.

It also amply demonstrates that, at the conclusion of the program, every club that responded could see the value of taking part.

Summary of action plans

The table below summarises the action plans that were created for the 17 clubs and centres that completed the program.

It captures information about what changes clubs and centres were asked to make (suggested column), and what changes they ultimately made (completed column).

| Action | Suggested | Completed |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Add green options | 17 participants | 16 participants |
| Remove red options | 16 participants | 15 participants |
| Price | 11 participants | 10 participants |
| Replace red/orange items with orange/green equivalents | 10 participants | 10 participants |
| Change preparation methods / substitute ingredients | 10 participants | 9 participants |
| Marketing | 10 participants | 9 participants |
| Add orange options | 9 participants | 8 participants |
| Reduce portion sizes | 6 participants | 6 participants |
| Customer research | 6 participants | 4 participants |
| Policy | 4 participants | 3 participants |
| Remove orange options | 1 participant | 1 participant |

NB: This table is a summary. In many cases, clubs and centres were asked to remove, add or change various items, but only actually changed one or two. Detailed action plans and the actual achievements of each club and centre are included (with identifying information removed) at Appendix Six.

What worked

Clearly, making menu changes was the most common and most successful of the changes suggested to the clubs and centres through the action plans. Such requests were clear, simple and relatively straightforward to implement.

- All clubs and centres were asked to add some green options to their menus, and all but one did so.
- Sixteen of the 17 participants were also asked to remove at least one red option from their menu, and all but one of these made this change.
- Ten were asked to replace red or orange items with orange or green (respectively) alternatives or equivalents.

Replacing ingredients (such as changing to low fat milk for coffees) or changing preparation methods (for example, not automatically adding salt to food, or shifting from fried to steamed items) were usually successful in implementation. Again, these changes are easy to understand and relatively simple to adopt.

Pricing was another area in which it was possible to made quick, effective changes. Making this change required clubs to understand that

- Price is a strong driver of demand – so higher priced items are slower to sell than lower priced alternatives
- Cutting the prices of green foods to be competitive with red foods helps drive demand for green foods
- Although demand for red foods might fall if prices are raised, the drop in units sold is at least partly compensated for by the extra margin made on each unit, and further made up by the corresponding increase in the sale of green foods.

Once clubs understood the impact of price on both demand and margins, they were generally happy to make changes to prices – either increasing the cost of red options or decreasing the cost of green options, or both.

Most clubs were also happy to make simple changes to better market green options to their customers – including rearranging displays and fridges, adding menu boards with the traffic light system in place and creating simple posters or advertisements for newly added green items.

Similarly, where changes to portion sizes were recommended (such as replacing large packets of chips with smaller sizes), they were generally adopted. In some cases, clubs and centres opted to add smaller sizes as an option while still retaining the larger size, so that the customer could make a choice.

What didn't work

Less successful were the program's efforts to encourage clubs and centres to undertake customer research or introduce policy.

These ideas were suggested more frequently in stage one of the pilot. The lukewarm response received from clubs at that point reduced the emphasis on these tactics in stage two.

These results are disappointing, because the best practice research completed in stage one clearly indicated that change is likely to be most successful and most sustainable when it is backed up with organisation-wide policy, and strong customer support.

However, as most of that research focused on interventions in the education setting, it could be that the difference lies in the **type** of organisation involved.

Although there is some evidence to suggest that clubs and centres do have a strong sense of their own agency or authority in some areas of practice – as evidenced by the growing number of clubs introducing codes of conduct, for example – it may be that they feel less confident in their authority to dictate healthy eating guidelines to their members or users.

Further research into the value of policy and research in healthy eating interventions in sports settings may uncover some specific reasons for this.

That said, research and policy were only two of eleven groups of tactics used in the program – and as the results attest, the others were successfully implemented by a large number of participants.

Critical success factors

It is certainly possible to significantly influence the kinds of food offered in sporting club canteens. Our experience indicates that the most important aspects to effecting change were

- The willingness of the Canteen Manager to change what are often long-held practices and try new things.
- Making the right information available in the right form. A written toolkit isn't enough on its own – the interactive workshop and detailed action plans tailored to the club's circumstances made a big difference to the level and pace of change.

It also helped when

- There was broad support for the change within the club – especially from committee members.
- Changes were made early – if canteen staff weren't willing to adopt new ideas and approaches early in the program, it was unlikely they would do it later on.
- The program team were able to respond to the circumstances of each club individually and able to consider influences such as volunteer availability, current menu, local suppliers, and attitudes of the committee of management.

Less critical factors

Less important to the success or level of change of the program was

- Whether staff were paid or volunteers.
- Frequency of operation.
- The incentive provided by the participation grant (while our initial research suggested fear of impacting profit was a barrier, the evaluation survey indicates that the grant was not acknowledged as the reason for signing up in the first place, or indeed a key driver of the change achieved).
- Whether or not the canteen manager was cynical or sceptical about the possibilities of change – as long as they were willing to try new things.
- The starting menu (even when the only 'green' item offered at the beginning by a canteen was water, change was possible).
- The quantum of support or number of meetings with the project managers (the amount of contact varied from club to club depending on their season, frequency and willingness to meet, and yet 14 out of 17 clubs felt it was the right amount of contact).

Observations

Many clubs overstated the health of their own menu offerings – even after they had categorised them with the traffic light system.

Even amongst those people responsible for handling food regularly, understanding of what is healthy and what is not healthy is very low.

Clubs tend to 'sell what they'd always sold' unquestioningly and rarely interrogated their own offerings or considered and researched alternatives – this would suggest an opportunity to develop a 'good buying guide' similar to those available to school canteens.

Clubs were more likely to add or remove items, or change pricing, than to do marketing, reduce portion sizes or introduce policies.

The approach adopted in this project was not to eliminate all unhealthy options. There is still a market for some unhealthy food options... and a club that eliminated all 'red' foods would definitely see an impact on profits. Customer expectations dictate that baseball clubs offer hot dogs, and football clubs offer meat pies – but in these cases, healthier ingredients or products, pricing and serving sizes make a big difference.

Most clubs were responsive rather than proactive. The changes and alternative foods introduced were either explored in the initial workshops or suggested by the project managers, rather than being proactively adopted by the clubs or centres. Clubs and centres also rarely initiated contact with the project managers.

There was a real unwillingness to undertake customer research or promote the change to customers.

The issue of storing perishable foods continues to be a major issue for many clubs. Very few volunteer organisations have enough refrigeration – which may be something that could be considered more by councils when facilities are being upgraded.

This program made a difference to how participants perceive healthy food. Overall we found it was seen as more important by those involved in serving it.

Our best opportunity to influence change is prior to the season starting, or just as it starts. The most change tends to occur in the first couple of months, after that it tends to settle into business as usual.

Some participants commented in the evaluation they would have made more change if they had more time. Our observation was that change tended to happen early then taper off the longer the program continued.

Appendix Six: summary of change made by each club and leisure centre

Appendix Six: summary of change made by each club and leisure centre

Regional centre 1

Action plan recommendations

- Remove up to 10 red items
- Add two orange items
- Add up to 10 green items
- Increase price of pies, pasties and sausage rolls relative to sandwiches
- Improve display of green products

Changes made

- Done
- Not done
- Done
- Done
- Done (sales increased)

Notes

Also switched to low fat milk, and focusing more on wholegrain / wholemeal breads for sandwiches

Regional club 1

Action plan recommendations

- Remove 12 red items
- Add 4 orange items
- Add 11 green items
- Increase prices of soft drinks relative to water
- Increase prices of pies, pasties and sausage rolls relative to sandwiches
- Improve display of green products, especially drinks
- Conduct customer survey before making changes

Changes made

- Done
- Done (six added)
- Four added
- Done
- Not done
- Done
- Not done

Notes

Also switched to low fat milk, cheese and ham

Regional club 2

Action plan recommendations

- Remove up to 30 red items
- Replace pies, pasties and sausage rolls with low fat, low salt items
- Add seven green items
- Increase price of soft drinks relative to water
- Increase price of pies, pasties and sausage rolls to sandwiches
- Improve display and promotion of green items
- Conduct customer survey before making changes

Changes made

- 15 removed
- Done
- Done (eight added)
- Done
- Done
- Done (sales increased)
- Done (taste testing)

Notes

Also replaced 600ml soft drinks with 475ml

Metro centre 1

Action plan recommendations

Remove 35 red items
Add 20 green items
Replace pies, pasties and sausage rolls with low fat, low salt items
Remove all larger serving sizes, where more than one size is offered
Switch from fried chicken nuggets to baked
Switch from full fat to low fat milk
Review all red items baked on site and switch to healthy ingredients
Improve display and promotion of green items

Changes made

10 removed
10 added
Done
Done
Not done
Not done, but added
Done
Done

Notes

N/A

Metro centre 2

Action plan recommendations

Remove 20 red items
Remove 5 orange items
Introduce 5 green items
Switch from milkshakes to fruit-based smoothies with low fat milk
Replace 600ml soft drinks with 375ml
Replace jumbo sausage roll with smaller, low fat, low salt variety
Replace 50g chips with 30g
Reduce price of water, relative to soft drink
Reduce price of green foods including sandwiches, salad and soup
Increase price of chips, pies, pasties and sausage rolls relative to green items
Improve display and promotion of green items

Changes made

Done
Done
Done
Done
Not done
Done
Not done, but added
Done
Not done
Done
Done – sales increased

Notes

Promoted healthy options to gym users and sales to that group have increased significantly. Have also introduced an 'order only' system in the evenings, so that no fried food is available after lunch.

Metro club 1

Action plan recommendations

Remove 5 red items
Add 3 orange items
Add 5 green items
Switch from large to small chocolate bars
Switch from large to small fruit juices
Switch to healthier hot dog option
Switch from full fat to low fat milk
Increase price of soft drinks and fruit juice relative to water
Increase price of hot chips relative to sandwiches
Improve promotion of green item

Changes made

Done
Done
Done (nine added)
Done
Not done
Not done
Done
Not done
Done
Done
Done
(colour coded menu)

Notes

N/A

Metro club 2

Action plan recommendations

Remove 8 red items
Replace 1 red item with orange alternative
Add 2 orange items
Add 14 green items
Switch to from full fat to low fat milk and dairy products
Increase price of hot dogs relative to green items
Price all newly added green items lower than red ones
Improve display and promotion of green items

Changes made

Five removed
Done
Not done
11 added
Done
Done
Done
Not done

Notes

N/A

Metro club 3

Action plan recommendations

Remove four red items
Add five green items
Replace pies, pasties and sausage rolls with low fat, low salt items
Switch from large to small chocolate bars
Reduce portion sizes of deep fried foods
Remove all larger serving sizes, where more than one size is offered
Stop salting food during cooking
Switch from full fat to low fat milk and dairy products
Promote newly added green items

Changes made

Done
Done
Done
Done
Done
Done
Done
Done
Done

Notes

Low fat, low salt vegetarian pastie also added.

Metro club 4

Action plan recommendations

Remove five red items
Add five orange items
Add six green items
Reduce portion sizes of fried food
Switch from fried to steamed dim sims
Switch from full fat to low fat milk and dairy products
Increase price of soft drinks and fruit juice relative to water
Increase price of all red food relative to green alternatives
Survey customers about proposed changes

Changes made

Done – eight removed
Three added
Done
Done
Done
Done
Done
Done
Not done, but discussions held with club officials

Notes

N/A

Metro club 5

Action plan recommendations

Reduce ten red items

Add ten green items

Replace fried dim sims with steamed dim sims

Replace three soft drink lines with fruit juice

Replace full fat, salty ingredients with low fat, low salt alternatives

Reduce portion sizes of red foods

Switch to heart smart frying oil

Increase price of soft drinks relative to water

Changes made

Some – four removed

Done

Steamed added but are still selling fried

Done

Done

Some (chocolate bars reduced in size)

Not done (cost)

Done

Notes

Canteen manager noted that customers still want 'red' foods available to them.

Metro club 6

Action plan recommendations

Add four green items

Remove three red items

Replace three soft drink lines with fruit juice

Replace full fat, salty ingredients with low fat, low salt alternatives

Increase price of soft drinks relative to water

Changes made

Done

Done

Done

Done

Done

Notes

N/A

Metro club 7

Action plan recommendations

Remove 30 red items

Add three orange items

Add seven green items

Replace pies, pasties and sausage rolls with low fat, low salt items

Replace fruit drinks with 100 per cent fruit juice

Switch from white bread to high-fibre, wholegrain and wholemeal

Remove 600ml soft drinks, leaving only smaller sizes

Increase price of soft drinks relative to water

Adopt healthy eating policy for club

Changes made

Done

Done

Done

Done

Done

Done

Some removed

Done

Done

Notes

Club notes that participation in program contributed directly to receiving \$500,000 grant for upgrading the kitchen. Club has decided not to have deep fryer installed as part of the planned upgrade.

Metro club 8**Action plan recommendations**

Remove five red items
Add four green items
Increase price of soft drinks relative to water
Switch from full fat to low fat milk and dairy
Switch to 'heart-smart' oil for deep frying
Adopt healthy eating policy for club

Changes made

Not done
Three added
Not done
Done
Not done
Not done

Notes

N/A

Rural centre 1**Action plan recommendations**

Remove 13 red foods
Add five orange items
Add 10 green items
Reduce portion sizes of all confectionary, where possible
Replace pies, pasties and sausage rolls with low fat, low salt items
Remove pizzas from party list, and replace with toasted sandwiches
Switch from full fat to low fat milk and dairy
Switch from white bread to high-fibre, wholegrain and wholemeal
Display menu with traffic light indicators

Changes made

Done - 15 removed
Three added
Done - 13 added
Done
Done
Done
Done
Done
In progress

Notes

N/A

Rural club 1**Action plan recommendations**

Remove three red items
Add eight green items
Replace red iceblocks with orange or green alternatives
Replace fruit drinks with 100 per cent fruit juice
Offer healthy barbecue every time canteen operates
Improve display and promotion of healthy items
Adopt healthy eating policy for club

Changes made

Done
Six added
Done
Done
Not done
Done
Done

Notes

N/A

Rural club 2

Action plan recommendations

- Introduce new healthy menu items to rotate through season
- Replace grilled burgers with low fat, low salt items
- Switched from full fat, salty to low fat, low salt condiments and sauces
- Replace pies, pasties and sausage rolls with low fat, low salt items
- Switch from white bread to high-fibre, wholegrain and wholemeal
- Adopt healthy eating policy for club

Changes made

- Done
- Done
- Not done
- Not done
- Done
- Done

Notes

Change to low fat, low salt pies etc not done due to club belief they were not available in area.

Rural club 3

Action plan recommendations

- Add nine green items
- Remove seven green items
- Switch from white bread to high-fibre, wholegrain and wholemeal
- Improve display of green items in fridge and bain marie
- Display menu with traffic light indicators
- Display posters promoting green products
- Survey customers about proposed changes

Changes made

- Done

Notes

N/A