

Making water the drink of choice in sport

Removing all 'red' drinks off display and healthy food labelling at Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre

In 2016, Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre recognised they could do more to support patrons who were trying to improve their health by providing healthier options in the café. With the backing of the City of Ballarat and advice from Sports Central, the café introduced a healthy choices nudge – removing all 'red' drink items off display and labelling food items using the Healthy Choices traffic light system (see right) to see what would happen.

The results were incredibly positive: sales revenue from drinks increased, water sales increased, more people were observed eating in the café and there were only a few requests for 'red' drinks not available in the fridge. Based on the success of this nudge trial, the City of Ballarat intends to develop a Healthy Choices food and drinks policy, which will be promoted in the community to encourage other retailers to run trials.

Impact of the initiative at the Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre:



Water sales increased while sports and soft drinks decreased considerably.



Revenue increased and more people were observed eating in the café.



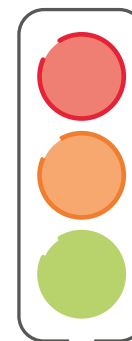
More people were observed buying salads and other 'green' food and drink options.






Most people chose what was available in the fridge and didn't ask for the removed 'red' drink items.

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We have had nothing but praise from our patrons/parents. They think it is wonderful we are supporting the health and wellbeing of our community. Parents are happier that less healthy options are no longer on display, which makes it easier for kids to choose healthy options.”

– Meg Smith, Café Coordinator, Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre.



Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre used the Victorian Government's *Healthy choices: food and drink guidelines* traffic light system to classify foods and beverages.

-  **Red:** Limit intake
-  **Amber:** Choose carefully
-  **Green:** Best choice

Impact of the trial on future policy at the Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre and the City of Ballarat:



The café went on to implement a Healthy Fridges strategy: 20% red drinks, 30% amber and 50% green drink options in line with Victorian Government guidelines.



The café has reduced the number of unhealthy food items, including lollies and intends to remove the majority of unhealthy food items off display.



The City of Ballarat plans to formalise the program into a Healthy Choices food and drinks policy to ensure sustainability of the initiatives.

Keys to success

Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre identified areas that were key to success of the trial:



Accessing expert advice on how to implement the changes was valuable.



Getting buy in from staff and managers is vital.



A champion who believes in the importance of the initiative makes it easier to implement.



Using education opportunities when people question changes increases acceptance.

“

As the café coordinator I have found this project to be a very rewarding experience. I believe it's important to educate people on the benefits of healthy eating, particularly from a young age.”

– Meg Smith, Café Coordinator, Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre

Recommendations for making healthy choice the easy choice in sport and recreation centres



Accessing expert advice on how to implement the changes was valuable.



If patrons ask for 'red' items not on display, use the opportunity to educate on why healthier choices are being promoted.



Remember change takes time. Start with a small change and build on it.

The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 requires all public organisations in Victoria to facilitate an environment and culture where healthy choices are easy choices for all Victorians.

For more resources and information about how to support sport organisations create welcoming and healthy environments, including healthy food and drink choices, visit: <https://vicsport.com.au/healthy-welcoming-sport>

For more information about other organisations making the healthy choice the easy choice, visit: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/easychoice

For more information and support with implementing The Victorian Government's Healthy Choices guidelines in sport and recreation centres, visit: www.heas.health.vic.gov.au/healthy-choices/sport-and-recreation-centres-and-parks

