



# Community Programs

## A time for reflection...

The *eat well be active* Community Programs (*ewba*) are nearing their conclusion at the end of June, thus it has been an important time for reflection. In this issue we reflect upon what both our team, and our two *ewba* communities have learned, and the future journey ahead.

We have captured valuable reflections from many of the key *ewba* stakeholder agencies as to their experiences in putting *ewba* into action.

Our stakeholders have shared their insights on the main lessons their agencies have learned, the most significant changes they have made, and their future plans.

Complimenting these reflections is a brief snapshot of key findings from the final *ewba* evaluation.

The final evaluation report will be published and available for download from our website soon.

On behalf of our whole team, we would like to say a tremendous thankyou to all those wonderful people and agencies that have supported and been involved in *ewba*.

It has been a privilege and pleasure to work with you and we are continually inspired by you!

We wish you well in your future journey promoting healthy eating and physical activity.

**Marian McAllister and  
Mel Triptree**  
Program Managers



## What have we learned?

The *eat well be active* Community Programs has learned how amazing it is to work with such talented, committed and supportive people in all the sites and organisations that have allowed us to work with them.

It has been a great journey which started in the best possible way, by building relationships from the beginning, and asking all of you what you needed to address the local barriers to healthy eating and physical activity. As manager of the program I want to commend all the Project Coordinators who were responsible for maintaining and growing these relationships over the years, they have done a great job.

Without these partnerships and relationships, *eat well be active* would not have been successful. We learned to listen to you - our community, and responded by together developing practical resources and programs, relevant workforce development opportunities and useful ways to promote healthy eating to children, young people and their families.

We learned that it is most useful:

- if resources and infrastructure are flexible and low cost.
- when resources and programs are easy to implement and tailor-made to their setting i.e. early childhood, primary school or youth.
- to be consistent with messages from early childhood settings to primary school to high school.
- to know what is most important to your organisation and compliment that.
- if we aim to make changes that will last over time.
- when we take things one step at a time because changes take time and support.

Hopefully these reflections will help with new relationships in the future so that the children, young people and their families that you support can continue to **eat well** and **be active!**

# Early Childhood (0-5 years)

ewba early childhood settings share their insights...

## Most significant change?

- 'Establishing a vegetable garden and involving children in growing, harvesting, cooking and eating their fresh produce. This has greatly increased children's interest in eating vegies'.
- 'Expanding our physical activity options by implementing programmed yoga for children'.
- **'Building staff knowledge of children's movement skill development'**.
- 'Gaining up to date, valuable resources and support materials and sharing these regularly with families (e.g. displays, newsletter inserts)'.
- 'Developing/updating our Active Play and Healthy Eating policies, which have then been strongly supported by our families'.
- **'Making healthy choices for our fundraisers and family events'**.
- 'Care providers have taken the knowledge and resources back to the children – very positive response to new experiences which the children have then taken to their own homes'.
- **'Going on regular walks with children'**.



## Where to from here?

- **'Train new staff in our ewba programs and keep offering healthy activities, ideas and information to children and parents in lots of different forms'**.
- 'We're now on same site as primary school so will extend resources and displays with their staff and parents. We've already reviewed our nutrition policy and now have a whole school approach'.
- 'Maintain our ongoing focus on healthy food and physical activity to ensure it's always weaved through our whole curriculum'.
- **'Continue to grow/develop new ways to engage children and parents in healthy ewba activities'**.
- 'Review what we've done, the journey we've travelled and the resources we've collected to ensure that we continue to offer a wide range of healthy experiences'.
- 'Continue with our high importance of promoting healthy eating and active play in our philosophy, policies and program'.
- **'Continue to update supporting information, resources and ideas, and share these with families'**.



## Most important lessons

- **'With the support of ewba, it has not been difficult to promote healthy eating and physical activity to children and families and to have many forms of healthy eating and active play opportunities throughout the day'**.
- 'As educators, we need to be informed, enthusiastic, energetic and strong role models to help our children and inform our families about healthy lifestyles.'
- **'It's not hard to promote and support healthy eating and physical activity! The whole family can be involved - children educate their families!'**
- 'Adults have a huge impact on developing positive attitudes to food in children, so our staff always model appropriate behaviours e.g. staff sit alongside the children and eat the same healthy snacks as they do'.
- **'To keep reoffering simple but practical ideas to parents to help their children eat healthier and be more active at home. Show parents what the children are doing and learning about eating well and being active through photos. Keep healthy information simple and clear for parents to see/read'**.
- 'Involve the children who will involve and teach their parents healthy habits'.
- **'It is an ongoing process to promote/facilitate healthy eating and physical activity that is an important part of our site 'wellbeing' focus. It needs to be maintained and developed constantly'**.
- 'Supporting families and parents is one of the best ways we can support children to eat well and be active'.

# Primary Schools

ewba Primary Schools reflect on their experiences...

## The most significant changes at our school



- 'Staff are much more aware of healthy food options in the school and class programmes'.
- **'We have 'Friday fresh' in our canteen once a week, and use fresh produce from our gorgeous garden!'**
- 'Water filters were installed by ewba - children are drinking more water and all have water bottles on their desks'.
- **'Starting a fruit and veg break every day, shared fruit platter twice a week, with parent helpers'.**
- 'The Fit to Lead program is now running at our lunchtimes, and more cooking resources are being used in our classrooms'.
- **'Children feeling good about themselves!'**
- 'The development of our vegetable garden and the inclusion of healthy ideas in our student-led forum'.

## Parents' response

- 'The responses from parents have been very good, with lots of children, parents and staff keen to take on new ideas about healthy eating and physical activity'.
- **'Parents being very pleased with the various programs which exposed their children to a wide variety of activities and learning opportunities'.**
- 'Fantastic response from both parents and children – newsletter inserts well received over the years!'



## Important lessons

- 'That it is important to teach children to think about what to eat, how you select it and the need for children to participate in a variety of fun physical activities'.
- **'Being physically active every day and enjoying healthy fresh food is the basis for good health and well being'.**
- 'Children can be involved in planning Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) menus and games which help them identify healthy food choices'.
- **'It's important to offer variety so all children will participate as different activities appeal to different students'.**
- 'That there needs to be great support and assistance from other agencies outside schools to run successful healthy eating and physical activity programs'.
- **'We are more aware of children's healthy eating habits and different healthy foods to serve at Out of School Hours Care'.**
- 'Our school intends to keep promoting healthy eating and physical activities through our newsletters and school policies'.

## Where to now?

- **'We will ensure 'eat well be active' is on our site plan every year, and we will promote healthy eating including lunchbox ideas in our school newsletter'.**
- 'At our school, we will keep our focus on healthy lifestyles through three groups – parents, students and staff working together'.
- **'We will continue to run the programs and use the resources that we introduced to our school'.**
- 'We are targeting healthier recess options, more physical activity and reduced screen time'.



# Youth

## Sustainability in the high schools and in the community youth sector



### Significant changes

- 'In the canteen we offer foods we prepare ourselves which allows our students greater choices of eating more fruit and vegetables'.
- **'Access to filtered, chilled water and water friendly classrooms across the school'**.
- 'Implementing the ewba Youth Leadership Program. This program has given the students the opportunity to be involved in both the decision making and development of initiatives to promote healthy eating, physical activity and drinking water within our school'.
- **'Incorporating healthy eating options and active games at events has been well received and enjoyed by the youth who have participated'**.

### Most important lessons learned

- 'It is important to help both the students and parents at your school, as sometimes parents need help too so that healthy habits continue at home as well as school'.
- **'It can sometimes be difficult to get things up and running in a school, for both students and staff'**.
- Be prepared for change to evolve slowly. Take a step-at-a-time approach, but be patient in allowing the students to drive it. Let them understand and experience the frustrations, planning, and then ultimately the success in making changes in a school environment.
- **'Don't be afraid to offer healthier food and lifestyle choices to young people – they are very open to giving it a go!'**

## Aboriginal community

### Working in partnership with the Aboriginal community

### Response from the community

- 'Significant changes made have been having healthy catering at local community events and at the local schools. Both have served as role modelling for the community around healthy eating'.
- **'The response from children and parents has been very positive, and the school based education has been welcomed. A lot of kids go home now and say I want this (healthy food) for tea.'**
- 'The support with the Women's Cooking Program has been very useful, particularly with the "Deadly Tucker" cookbooks. Also the utensils to take home, that will be a really nice surprise at the end of it'.
- **'After receiving the Aboriginal new mum's packs, some of the mums have gone on to practice baby massage at home'**.

### Where to from here?

- 'The community have learned that healthy food tastes just as good as unhealthy food'.
- **'We will continue with healthy catering at community events....when we offer healthy lunches it's always gone, there are hardly any leftovers'**.



# Evaluation

**THANK YOU** to the 39 Primary schools whose **students, Principals, Teachers, Canteen & OSHC staff** completed surveys. Thanks also to the 48 early childhood sites; 9 High schools (principals,canteens); and > 900 **parents** who completed surveys.

A comprehensive evaluation took place to describe the impact of ewba in Morphett Vale and Murray Bridge. A mixture of data was collected, including surveys of child care/preschool directors; primary school students, parents, teachers and principals. Additional data for preschool children were also analysed. Approximately 40 interviews were also conducted across all settings.

The evaluation results for ewba are very encouraging when compared to data from two comparison communities in SA. **In summary:**

## **CHILD CARE PROVIDERS/CENTRES AND PRESCHOOLS**

reported greater improvements in their sites such as:

- Higher uptake of nutrition and physical activity (PA) policies;
- Improvements to the environment such as equipment, space and set time for active play;
- Fruit and vegetables for fundraising;
- Positive attitudes towards healthy eating and PA among staff/care providers;
- Higher uptake of healthy eating T&D

**Marked improvements were observed in preschool children's weight status** in Morphett Vale and Murray Bridge, compared to children in comparison sites.

Several **early childhood stakeholders** were interviewed, which highlighted remarkable uptake and implementation of a variety of comprehensive approaches. Positive impacts among children were reported; and staff and directors had positive attitudes, and role-modelled healthy behaviour. New policies and practices were becoming ingrained with regular input from staff. Children were beginning to 'teach' their parents about healthy eating and PA. Strong networks had been established among stakeholders especially in Morphett Vale, facilitating action in sites.

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS** reported several changes that were more improved in ewba sites than comparison sites. ewba primary school **Teachers** reported more positive changes such as:

- Student exposure to fruit and veg (e.g. breaks in class, cooking sessions, growing fruit and veg)
- [To some extent] Student exposure to PA (e.g. curriculum, PA during class, PA homework equipment and PA opportunities at school etc)
- Encouragement of water bottles in classrooms.
- Teacher skills in healthy eating AND in PA
- Teacher T&D in healthy eating AND in PA
- Teacher knowledge of child health recommendations, including serves of Fruit (1-2 serves) serves of Veg (3-5 serves) & max daily screen time (2 hours)

Students in ewba primary schools also perceived more improvement in the **school environment** in terms of their perception of **supportive environment for PA**. This tended to be reported most by girls.

**Parents** of ewba school students reported greater improvements in the **home environment** such as:

- Less availability of sweetened drinks;
- Less availability of non-core foods (e.g. chips, cake, biscuits, confectionery);
- Positive attitudes towards healthy eating and PA among parents/caregivers;
- More rules around healthy eating;
- Less TV sets at home and less 'screen time'.

ewba parents also reported a greater improvement in their **children's behaviour** such as having at least **3 or more serves of vegetables each day**, and being involved in **PA after school**.

ewba parents also showed greater improvements in their own knowledge of the **recommended serves of vegetables** (and fruit to some extent) for children.

No changes in weight status were observed, but a **substantial improvement in waist circumference** occurred in ewba primary school students compared to students in the comparison areas. This is very encouraging given the importance of having a healthy weight distribution, even when weight status (BMI) is considered normal. Data from principals, canteens and OSHC are still being analysed.

Several **primary school stakeholders** were interviewed, which highlighted the positive changes occurring in the curriculum, in classrooms, and across the school community. Positive impacts were observed among children, e.g. through peer leadership. Teachers were undertaking more professional development related to healthy eating and PA. Canteens were moving to a healthier food supply. Strong networks had been established among stakeholders especially in Morphett Vale, facilitating action in sites.

**HIGH SCHOOL** stakeholders, including students were interviewed, which highlighted positive changes in the form of promotions; peer leadership programs; in canteens; and among teachers. Positive impacts were observed among students through improved knowledge and interest in promoting healthy eating and PA to their fellow students, and in making visible changes to the school environment.

**A full report on project lessons and evaluation findings will be provided in the ewba Final report, to be released mid-2010.**

## Where to from here?

Whilst ewba concludes on June 30, the journey continues. Now is the opportunity for all those involved in ewba to **continue** to maintain the passion, energy and commitment to the policies, resources, programs, outdoor environmental changes, curriculum and activities they have developed over the past five years. These changes have, and will continue to be vital to the health and well being of children, young people and families into the future.

Post-ewba, other potential opportunities exist to support ewba stakeholder agencies with healthy eating and physical activity:

- **OPAL Onkaparinga:** Currently arrangements with the Onkaparinga Council are being finalised for Morphett Vale to become part of the OPAL program, with continued support to ewba Morphett Vale sites from later in 2010.
- **Southern Adelaide Health Service Healthy Weight Coordinators (HWC):** HWC work with stakeholder agencies supporting children 0-12 years and their families in southern Adelaide. Their aim is to increase healthy eating and physical activity in children and families. For more information, contact Emma Donaghey on 8384 9266.
- **Murray Mallee CHS Healthy Weight support:** currently funding is being pursued to further support ewba Murray Bridge sites. Contact MMCHS for further information post June 30.
- **Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in the Early Years:** This project aims to promote healthy eating and being active in early childhood settings, supporting educators to encourage eating well and being active within families. For information contact Penny Kazimierzczak on: 8226 8862.

Remember, 'to get through the hardest journey we need take only one step at a time, but we must keep on stepping'. **Goodbye and thanks from the ewba Team!**

## Health Centre Contact Details

### Morphett Vale

#### Southern Primary Health

Noarlunga Village  
P.O Box 437  
Alexander Kelly Drive  
Noarlunga Centre  
South Australia 5168  
Tel 08 8384 9266 Fax 08 8384 9248

### Murray Bridge

#### Murray Mallee Community Health Service

P.O Box 346  
Swanport Road  
Murray Bridge  
South Australia 5253  
Tel 08 8535 6800 Fax 08 8535 6808

### eat well be active Website

[http://www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/branches/  
health-promotion/hp-eat-well-be-active.htm](http://www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/branches/health-promotion/hp-eat-well-be-active.htm)



## Intervention resources...hot off the press!

ewba has implemented a range of key interventions within its' two target communities. Each of these interventions has been described in an 'Intervention Summary' document in a new section recently added to the ewba website called *Intervention Resources*. The 'Overall Intervention Summary' provides a general explanation of the project and its' intervention framework. Supporting this are eighteen subsequent summaries related to the three age groups that ewba has worked with (early childhood, primary schools and youth) and two additional summaries describing interventions with the Aboriginal community.

Resources used to implement these interventions that have been developed by ewba staff are available online under the link to each relevant Intervention Summary. External resources used by ewba are listed in links included with relevant Intervention Summaries in the 'Associated Resources' section.

The ewba team views these documents as a valuable opportunity to share practical information, lessons learned and resources relating to these interventions with other professionals working with children, young people and/or families in allied fields who may be interested in implementing similar interventions.

**A taste of the intervention summaries:** \*Overall ewba summary \*Integrating healthy eating into curriculum \*Aboriginal Mums' Packs \*Community Events \*Drinking Water \*Early Childhood Workforce Development \*Energising Outdoor Learning \*Family Loan Packs \*FOODcents \*Grant Support \*Local Action Groups \*Talking with Families \*Youth Leadership \*Youth Worker Nutrition \*Peer leadership \*Policy support

Implemented by Southern Primary Health of Southern Adelaide Health Service and Murray Mallee Community Health Service of Country Health SA



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