

A Thriving Community Where Everyone Belongs



Healthy Children Growing Together: Final Evaluation Report

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Melton City Council
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CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Background	5
3. Healthy Children Growing Together Project Overview	6
4. Delivery	7
5. Evaluation	8
6. Outcomes	9
7. Recommendations.....	17
8. Conclusion	19
Appendix I: Healthy Children Growing Together: Evaluation Framework.....	20
Data Collection Tools	25

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 BACKGROUND

The City of Melton has higher rates of overweight and obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and lower rates of physical activity, and fruit and vegetable consumption compared to Victoria (VPHS, 2014; VicHealth, 2015). The rise in the number of overweight children is very concerning, as overweight children are at a greater risk of becoming overweight adults, and having chronic health conditions.

Melton City Council launched the Healthy Children Growing Together (HCGT) Project in June 2014, after receiving \$300,000 funding from Macedon Ranges and North Western Melbourne Medicare Local in April 2014. The project aimed to reduce childhood obesity rates through primary prevention and health promotion approaches, using a range of mutually reinforcing strategies targeting children 0-8 years and their families.

This report details the outcomes of initiatives implemented through the project from August 2014 to June 2017 and recommendations for sustainability.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The HCGT project aimed to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of children and their families within the City of Melton, through a suite of mutually reinforcing healthy eating and physical activity strategies, targeted at children 0-8 years old and their families.

The objectives of the project were to:

- Raise awareness of the importance of physical activity and health eating in maintaining a healthy lifestyle among children and their families
- Increase the physical activity levels of children and their families
- Raise awareness and provide opportunities for whole of family physical activity initiatives
- Encourage children to eat the recommended daily intake of fruit (2 serves) and vegetables (5 serves)
- Support policy development to create healthy physical and social environments
- Build the capacity of early years service providers (e.g. kindergartens, occasional care, Maternal and Child Health and schools) and other key stakeholders to develop, implement and evaluate healthy lifestyle initiatives
- Improve health literacy among families
- Build an evidence base that supports growth area planning that is conducive to community wellbeing

1.3 DELIVERY

A number of engagement sessions were conducted with internal and external stakeholders to determine local issues and needs to prioritise relevant strategies for children and families to address obesity within the City of Melton. Research was also conducted on successful strategies to address physical activity levels and fruit and vegetable consumption for children that had been implemented in other areas. Based on determined needs of the community, a range of strategies were developed to meet the objectives of the project, including:

- Capacity building through professional development
- Building health and wellbeing messages into existing programs
- Broad reaching event engagement
- Community education programs
- Physical activity programs
- Resource distribution

All strategies were offered free of charge to children and families in various locations across the municipality, as well as for educators and professionals working with the target group. Strategies were adapted to suit the

various needs of the target groups, including time, duration, type, venue, location, and the ability for children to attend with parents and carers, to reduce the number of barriers facing families to attend.

1.4 OUTCOMES

Fifteen different project strategies were implemented, with 520 individual program sessions and events, reaching 12,181 children and families across the City of Melton. A range of approaches were taken, including working directly with Council staff to adapt programs to include health messages; professional development for the early years sector and school; broad reach festival and event engagement; community education and activity programs; funding for schools to implement health changes; social media engagement; and resource distribution.

A range of stakeholders were engaged in HCGT program delivery, including:

- Council Services:
 - Maternal and Child Health Services
 - Leisure Services
 - Library Services
 - Children's Services
- Local cafes and restaurants
- Early years educators and cooks
- School teachers and canteen managers

1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

While a number of elements of the HCGT program have become embedded in Council practice, there are a number of initiatives that need to be considered to determine ongoing delivery across the City of Melton.

Key recommendations include:

- Continue to deliver Get Active in the City of Melton program in some form, either for a reduced period, with 'come and try' sessions run by community groups, or subsidised programs through neighbourhood houses
- Integrate content from the Conversations with Parents- Feeding Your Baby program into new parents groups, and offer one session per new parent group cycle, rotated between venues
- Provide free fruit and water available at event engagements targeting children and families, and ensure no discretionary foods are offered
- Continue to provide professional development and networking sessions for schools
- Explore a student placement opportunity with a university to support healthy food systems within schools, including canteens and breakfast clubs
- Support Children's Services to deliver at least one health and wellbeing related professional development sessions as part of their existing training calendar or networks

1.6 CONCLUSION

The HCGT project had a significant reach to a wide range of children and their families, both directly, and indirectly through the settings that they access, developing an evidence base for effective strategies to improve the health and wellbeing of children and families across the City of Melton. Overall there were positive outcomes for participants, leading to an increase in positive knowledge, awareness and behaviours related to physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption.

2. BACKGROUND

Overweight and Obesity in Children

The number of overweight children in Australia has doubled in recent years, with a quarter of children considered overweight or obese. Causes of obesity in children include unhealthy food choices, lack of physical activity and family eating habits.

This rise in the number of overweight children is disturbing because it causes health problems and can lead to social problems. Overweight children are more likely to be teased by their peers or to develop low self-esteem or body image problems. Once children are overweight, it requires a lot of effort and commitment for them to return to a healthy weight.

Overweight and obesity in children are among the most important risks to children's long and short-term health. Overweight or obese children are more likely to remain obese as adolescents and become overweight or obese adults. About 80 per cent of obese adolescents will become obese adults.

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) identifies that 20.9% of City of Melton children are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDI and 11.3% are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains. 8.6% are vulnerable to health and wellbeing problems.

Health and Wellbeing – City of Melton

Health and wellbeing indicators in the City of Melton fare much worse when compared to the rest of Victoria. These include:

- 29.8% of residents are considered pre-obese (overweight) and 27.2% obese, compared to 31.2% and 18.8% respectively in Victoria (VPHS, 2014)
- More residents in the City of Melton are in active, and less complete enough physical activity when compared to the rest of Victoria. 24.3% of City of Melton residents are defined as inactive, compared to 18.9% in Victoria. Only 34.7% of residents engaged in four or more days of physical activity per week, compared to 41.3% in Victoria (VicHealth, 2015)
- City of Melton residents consume 2.1 serves of vegetables compared to 2.2 in Victoria, and 1.6 serves of fruit, the same as Victoria (VicHealth, 2015)
- 9.4% of adults in the City of Melton report having type 2 diabetes, compared to only 5.3% in Victoria and 6.0% in the North West region (VPHS, 2014). It should be noted that for every one person who has been diagnosed with diabetes, there is another one person who has diabetes but has not yet been diagnosed. Therefore the diabetes rate in the City of Melton is estimated to be closer to 20%.
- Breastfeeding within the City of Melton is the lowest in the region, with only 9.2% fully breastfed at 6 months, compared to 32.2% in the South Western region, and 34% in Victoria (DET, 2015).

3. HEALTHY CHILDREN GROWING TOGETHER PROJECT OVERVIEW

Melton City Council launched the HCGT Project in June 2014, after receiving funding from Macedon Ranges and North Western Melbourne Medicare Local in April 2014. The project aimed to reduce childhood obesity rates through primary prevention and health promotion approaches, using a range of mutually reinforcing strategies targeting children 0-8 years and their families. \$300,000 total funding was received. This report details the outcomes of initiatives implemented through the project from August 2014 to June 2017 and recommendations for sustainability.

The HCGT project aimed to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of children and their families within the City of Melton, through a suite of mutually reinforcing healthy eating and physical activity strategies, targeted at children 0-8 years old and their families.

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- Improve health literacy among families
- Build an evidence base that supports growth area planning that is conducive to community wellbeing

4. DELIVERY

Background research was conducted to look at relevant strategies that had been previously successfully implemented in other areas that looked at addressing child and family physical activity levels and fruit and vegetable consumption. A large number of internal engagement meetings were held with Council staff across Children's Services, Maternal and Child Health Services, Leisure Services, Engineering Services, Community Planning and Library Services.

External engagement was conducted with a number of stakeholders, including the Early Years Advisory Committee, kindergarten teachers, Djerriwarrh Health Services (DjHS), and various program and training service providers.

Based on identified needs of the community, a range of strategies were developed to meet the objectives of the project, including:

- Get Active in the City of Melton
- Conversations with Parents series
- Event Engagement
- Council Program Engagement
- Healthy Kinder Kids
- Professional Development- Early Years Sector and Schools
- Resource distribution
- Community based initiatives

All strategies were offered free of charge to children and families in various locations across the municipality, as well as for educators and professionals working with the target group. Strategies were adapted to suit the various needs of the target groups, including time, duration, type, venue, location, and the ability for children to attend with parents and carers, to reduce the number of barriers facing families to attend.

An MOU was established with DjHS to employ a dietitian to work on the HCGT project 12 hours per week, from March 2015 to December 2016. This was determined to be the most cost effective way of having a dietitian support the development and implementation of nutrition related strategies. The dietitian delivered the following strategies:

- Healthy Kinder Kids
- Conversations with Parents: Fussy Eating and Feeding Your Baby
- Holiday program activities: Library and Leisure Services programs
- Development of the Early Years Healthy Eating Guide
- Children's Week kids cooking workshops

5. EVALUATION

An evaluation consultant was chosen through a tender process, who was responsible for developing an evaluation framework and evaluation tools, to guide the project evaluation.

The evaluation framework focused on utilising outcome, impact and process evaluation measures, aiming to provide long term, medium term and short term project outcomes to determine the success of the project.

A range of evaluation tools were developed to be used with program participants, with a specific survey for community members, educators, and tools developed to evaluate specific programs, such as Get Active in the City of Melton.

The full evaluation framework is available in Appendix I.

6. OUTCOMES

Fifteen different project strategies were implemented, with over 500 individual program sessions and events, reaching over 12,000 children and families across the City of Melton.

Healthy Children Growing Together Project Outcomes		
Strategy	Number of Sessions	Total Participant Numbers
Get Active in the City of Melton	216	2,393
Conversations with Parents	51	241
Healthy Kinder Kids	17	216
Early Years and School Professional Development	23	256
Festivals and Events	9	3,210
Healthy Story Time	50	2,300
Holiday Programs	4	287
Kindergarten Readiness Month	2	114
Active April Family Fun Day	3	1746
Parents and Prams Walking Groups	24	155
The Corner @ McKenzie: Community Activation Project	121	2,163
Total	520	12,181

GET ACTIVE IN THE CITY OF MELTON

Get Active in the City of Melton was offered as six weeks of free physical activity programs. A wide variety of programs were trialled to suit a range of ages, abilities, interests and family dynamics. Programs ranged from Pilates in the park, gentle Zumba, cardio tennis, active families and kids get active sessions. While the first series was all offered as outdoor programs, the following series were run as a combination of indoor and outdoor activities.

	2015	2016: Summer	2016: Spring	2017
Number of programs	9	12	14	12
Number of sessions	54	72	78	72
Number of registrations	539	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*
Number of participants	316	660	620	60

*Registrations were not taken to reduce the administration burden on interested participants, enabling them to just turn up on the day.

Get Active in the City of Melton provided a good opportunity to trial a range of different physical activity programs, on offer to the community free of charge, in a variety of locations, suited to a range of needs and demographics.

Feedback from the program participants was overwhelmingly positive, with a range of perceived physical and social benefits. Evaluation results showed that participants:

- agreed the program encouraged them to be more active
- provided an opportunity to try new programs
- enjoyed activities delivered outdoors

- felt good about themselves for participating
- believed the instructors were skilled and motivated them
- met new people

Many participants commented on the inspiration having the program gave to them to get out of the house, to exercise, to do something for themselves, and to do something with the children. And over and over again, people mentioned the fun they had, the laughs, the satisfaction, the enjoyment and the pleasure they and their family got from participating.

It seems that having run this program a number of times has resulted in building a community demand for the program, however having a dedicated Project Officer to support the delivery of this program was a clear determinant in its success. Participant numbers in 2017 were significantly lower than in previous years due to the lack of a Project Officer role.

A more detailed evaluation report for the *Get Active in the City of Melton* program is available as Appendix 3.

CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS

Conversations with Parents was the name of a series of parenting information programs on offer to parents within the City of Melton. The program was a collaboration with Maternal and Child Health, and built on their existing Sleep and Settling program. Three additions were made to the series, including Feeding Your Baby, a program focussing on introducing solids to infants; Fussy Eating, helping parents to address causes and find solutions for children with fussy eating habits; Staying Healthy While Pregnant, a program to support healthy eating and physical activity for women during pregnancy.

	2015	2016	2017
Feeding Your Baby	14 sessions 95 participants 6.7 average/session	17 sessions 85 participants 5 average/session	7 sessions 27 participants 3.9 average/session
Fussy Eating	8 sessions 47 participants 5.9 average/session	11 sessions 44 participants 4 average/session	3 sessions 8 participants 2.7 average/session
Staying Healthy While Pregnant	2 sessions 5 participants 2.5 average/session	N/A	N/A

Evaluation findings for the programs showed that:

- program participants reported being between 95-100% very confident/somewhat confident to make the changes they had planned after attending the session
- most *Feeding Your Baby* participants were first time mothers, showing the importance of accessing new parents with health and wellbeing information due to their availability and willingness to learn
- attendance at *Staying Healthy While Pregnant* was extremely low, which was in part due to the hard to reach nature of the target audience, with many working or having other children, and not being available to attend programs like this.
- *Feeding Your Baby* and *Fussy Eating* participants reported the sessions were a comfortable and informal setting to ask questions.
- while all sessions were developed and delivered by a Dietitian, it is possible that programs could be delivered by a skilled family program facilitator.
- changes to the delivery of the new parent programs in 2016 may have impacted the number of participants.

A follow-up evaluation was conducted with families between six and twelve months after attending the program and found:

- 96% of participants could recall at least one piece of information from the session
- 89% of participants had made at least one change to provide healthier food options to their family, such as how foods are offered, the type of foods purchased, and understanding how to read product labels.
- 36% of participants strongly or somewhat agreed that their family ate more vegetables as a result of attending the session
- 29% of participants felt they knew how to select a healthier product in the supermarket
- 61% shared the information from the sessions with at least one other person

EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Over 3,200 community members were reached through nine event engagements. These engagements provided an opportunity to raise awareness, build capacity and provide active participation in a range of activities promoting healthy eating and physical activity. Events were often less formal engagements and provided a short opportunity to get health messages across to participants, which may have resulted in lower learning outcomes than formalised programs.

Event Engagement	Participant Reach	Description
Kindergarten Family Engagement Events 2014	108 families provided active play and healthy eating information across both sessions	2x sessions run at Blackdog Drive and Melton Central Kindergartens as a family event to engage parents on active play and healthy eating
Children's Week 2015	129 families attended cooking workshops 160 oral health packs distributed	Cooking workshops and oral health information packs distributed at Melton and Taylors Hills events Foost and The Travelling Kitchen delivered these sessions
Children's Week 2016	142 children participated in cooking workshops	Cooking workshops held at Melton and Taylors Hill events Foost delivered these sessions
Djerriwarrh Festival 2014	150 families	Healthy eating information distributed
Djerriwarrh Festival 2016	Up to 500 families	Healthy drink display and engagement activity in Children's Services tent
Summersault Festival 2015	100 families	Fruit decorating activity
Active April Fun Day 2015	321 children and families 175 healthy smoothies distributed	A range of active play games and resources for children Bike'n'blend smoothies
Active April Fun Day 2016	425 children and families 150 pieces of fruit distributed	A range of active play games and resources for children
Active April Fun Day 2017	1000+ children and families in attendance 400 pieces of fruit distributed	A range of active play games and resources for children Specific activities for babies and toddlers for the first time

COUNCIL PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

A number of Council programs and activities were utilised to integrate health messages into the content of these existing programs. In some instances, a health focussed session was offered as a one-off in a pre-planned program/session. In other cases, such as with Story Time, healthy story time sessions have been integrated into the ongoing program, and will remain in core Council business after the conclusion of the project.

Program	Number of sessions	Number of participants	Partners	Description
Healthy Story Time	50	2300	Melton and Caroline Springs Libraries	Topics include: - Healthy eating - Fussy eating - Active play - Wellness These sessions are run at both Melton and Caroline Springs libraries, across five weekly sessions, with four cycles of healthy topics each year. These are an ongoing part of Story Time
Healthy Story Time: Kids Cooking Session	2	37	Foost	Hands-on kids cooking session as part of 'Healthy Eating' Story Time
<i>Get Activated Stay Motivated</i> Leisure Services Holiday Program	2	85	DjHS Leisure Services	One session featured a parents session on healthy lunchboxes (n=25), with the other providing a game for kids about healthy foods (n=60)
Library Services Holiday Programs	2	37	Foost	Hands-on kids cooking session
Kinder Readiness Month	2	114	DjHS	One session run in 2015 and one in 2017 on healthy lunchboxes, oral health and active play for kinder age children

HEALTHY KINDER KIDS

A session was developed to support families with kindergarten aged children to understand the dietary guidelines for children, physical activity requirements, and oral health issues for children, and how to support healthy eating and active play in an interactive and interesting way. Sessions were offered to each kindergarten within the City of Melton, with times and days flexible to suit parents and carers around drop-off and pick-up times.

Healthy Kinder Kids	2015	2016
Number of sessions	12	2
Number of participants	74	15
Average/session	6.2	7.5

Session attendance varied greatly, with some sessions having only two parents attend, while others had up to 12. Over 14 sessions, 89 parents and carers were engaged. Many were very difficult to engage as they often did not have the ability to stay during kindergarten session times. However, the sessions were quite successful, given that 93% of participants reported they were confident to make changes as a result of attending the sessions.

PARENTS AND PRAMS WALKING GROUPS

New parents have been a traditionally difficult group to engage in health and wellbeing programs, especially walking groups. Through HCGT, a Parents and Prams walking group was started, with varying locations across Melton, Caroline Springs and Eynesbury. Over 2016-2017, 24 Parents and Prams groups were run, with a total of 155 participants, with an average of 6.4 participants per session. The majority of participants were women, with children ranging in age from infant to preschool age.

THE CORNER @ MCKENZIE: COMMUNITY ACTIVATION PROJECT

The HCGT Project obtained additional funding through the VicHealth Community Activation Project to deliver a short-term space activation within the Melton Town Centre. The aim of the project was to activate an under-utilised space with a range of physical activity and social cohesion programs and events. The space chosen was the corner of Palmerston and McKenzie Streets Melton, as this would be permanently transformed in Stage 2 of the Town Centre Redevelopment. *The Corner @ McKenzie* provided a good opportunity to trial a range of activation initiatives to determine what could be effective as part of the new Melton Town Centre precinct.

The Corner @ McKenzie was delivered from September 2015 to March 2016, with 121 events, reaching 2,163 participants. A range of programs were delivered including free play activities for children, structured physical activity programs for various demographics, and a ping pong table. A number of Council departments used the space to deliver programs, and other program partners included Circus Oz, Australian Ballet, and Arts Centre Melbourne.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A range of professional development opportunities were provided for staff working across the early years sector, including educators, cooks, maternal and child health nurses, and school teachers and staff, in both information provision and hands-on practical sessions. In total, 23 sessions were delivered to over 300 professionals. Topics included healthy eating, pleasurable food education, oral health, active play, nature play, breastfeeding, physical activity and sedentary behaviour.

Professional Development	No. of sessions	No. of attendees	Attendees	Partner Organisations	Comments
Healthy Eating in Long Day Care	3	15	Directors and Centre Cooks	Healthy Eating Advisory Service (HEAS)	The session provided information on creating a healthy menu for childcare centres. Two services submitted their centre menus to be assessed through the HEAS
Healthy Eating in Schools	2	10	Teachers and canteen managers	Healthy Eating Advisory Service	The session provided information on meeting the Healthy Choices Guidelines for canteens and food within other areas of the school E.g. fundraising
Cooking and Nutrition for Kids	2	22	Family Day Care Educators	Foost	81% of participants felt very confident and 19% felt somewhat confident to make the changes they had planned after the session. The demographic of family day care educators also showed that 74% were born in a country other than Australia, the highest of any training delivered.
Healthy Little Smiles – Oral Health	1	20	A range of early years services educators and MCH staff	Dental Health Services Victoria	All participants Strongly Agreed or Agreed that they intended on using the information they learnt back in their services.

Oral Health Resource Review	1	35	Maternal and child health nurses	Dental Health Services Victoria	Oral health flipcharts distributed to all MCH offices to promote oral health to families and children
Nature Based Play	5	81	Family Day Care Educators and children Occasional Care Early Years Staff	Karen Glancy Early Childhood Consultant	The session was hands on and provided ideas and resources for educators to use with their children
Breastfeeding in Early Years	3	21	A range of early years services educators	Nourish Lactation Consultants	Training on how to support breastfeeding friendly environments within early years sector. Resources provided to each attendee
Early Years Mental Health	1	52	A range of early years services educators	KidsMatter Early Years	Children's mental wellbeing and mental health promoting environments
Early Years Healthy Eating	1	27	A range of early years services educators	Foost	Early Years Healthy Eating Guide distributed to attendees
Active Play in Early Years	1	22	A range of early years services educators	Amanda Stirrat Active Play Consultant	Educator training in supporting children's development of fundamental movement skills
Kindergym Staff Training	1	3	Leisure Services Staff	Deakin University Amanda Stirrat Active Play Consultant	Kindergym reaches approx. 250 kids per week, so training for these staff has a great reach
Transform-Us! Schools' Physical Activity Program	1	5	Primary Teachers	Deakin University	Training for teachers on reducing sedentary time and increasing physical activity levels. Schools received funding through an EOI process to implement initiatives
Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program	1	5	Primary Teachers	Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation	Schools received funding to implement cooking and gardening initiatives to support their kitchen garden program
Total	23	318			

RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION

To support the uptake of healthy eating, oral health and physical activity behaviours, a number of resources were developed and distributed to families throughout the municipality. Approximately 7,400 resources were provided through ongoing programs and services, specific project programs, and events targeting families and children.

Title	Number	Partners	Comments
Cooking for Kids Cookbook	2100	Feeding Your Baby Program MCH 4 month visits	These are now distributed ongoing at all 4 month KAS visits
Early Years Healthy Eating Guide	150	Kindergartens Long Day Care Family Day Care	A localised guide was developed to support early years services to implement a whole-of-service approach to healthy eating
Toothbrushes and oral health information	5,000	Family Day Care Maternal and Child Health Kindergartens Healthy Kinder Kids program Children's Week event Libraries programs Housing Services	Distributed to families through a range of services, programs and events
Yarning About Breastfeeding	90	Kirrip House Maternal and Child Health DjHS Libraries Breastfeeding Support Service Stevenson House Djerriwarrh Community House Melton South Community Centre	Books were distributed to a range of services and community centres that have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and community members
Other breastfeeding resources	40	Early Years Educators Libraries Maternal and Child Health	<i>Mama's Milk</i> and <i>We Like to Nurse</i> story books relevant for early years sector

COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVES

BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Due to the low breastfeeding rates in the City of Melton, the Australian Breastfeeding Association program, 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' was promoted to local businesses to support normalising of breastfeeding in public. Ten cafes/restaurants became registered venues for the program, displaying 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' stickers. Both CS Square and Woodgrove Shopping Centres also registered for the program and now display program stickers. Breastfeeding friendly venues will also be promoted as part of future initiatives, including the development of a City of Melton Food Guide, *Much More to Taste*.

A number of Council and community facilities were also accredited under the Australian Breastfeeding Association Baby Care Room Awards. Woodgrove and Caroline Springs Square, along with six other Melton City Council community facilities were accredited with a 5 star rating, including: Melton Library and Learning Hub,

Bridge Rd Children's and Community Centre, Botanica Springs Children's and Community Centre, Springside Community Centre, Creekside Maternal and Children Health Centre, Kororoit Creek Early Learning Centre.

GREEN LIGHT LUNCH BOX COMPETITION

In 2016 a Green Light Lunch Box Competition was trialled with local cafes to promote healthy lunch options for children. While six cafes participated, there was little profit on healthy items offered and low sales, which meant the initiative didn't continue past the trial period.

BREAST PUMP PURCHASING PROGRAM

A need was identified by the Melton City Council Breastfeeding Support Service Lactation Consultants, that local mums needed access to affordable high quality electric breast pumps, to support the continuation of breastfeeding. No such affordable high quality product was available for purchase locally, and as a result many women were prematurely finishing breastfeeding and turning to alternative feeding methods. As such, a partnership was developed with DjHS, and 20 breast pumps were purchased through HCGT and made available for purchase through the DjHS Melton and Caroline Springs Centres to local mums in needs at cost price.

COUNCIL BASED INITIATIVES

BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WORKPLACES

While Melton City Council has held accreditation through the Australian Breastfeeding Association as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace since 2011, this has only been for one facility, the Melton Civic Centre. Through HCGT, a second facility, the Caroline Springs Civic Centre, was also accredited, providing greater access to breastfeeding and/or expressing facilities for Council Staff. Staff are also encouraged to access the accredited Baby Care Room facilities if the Civic Centre facilities are unavailable or inaccessible. See *Breastfeeding Friendly Communities* for more information on this.

Also within this initiative, the project advocated to enable staff to access Council's Breastfeeding Support Service, including those that live outside of the municipality. A letter is included in all maternity leave packs that are provided to staff, and no post-natal restrictions are provided on accessing the service, which is often a barrier to accessing support, with many hospital breastfeeding support services only available until 3 or 6 months after birth.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

While a number of elements of the HCGT program have become embedded in Council practice, there are a number of initiatives that need to be considered to determine ongoing delivery across the City of Melton. The following are a number of recommendations for some key project strategies.

GET ACTIVE IN THE CITY OF MELTON

The community expectation that has been built around this program is quite high. Many have come to expect that there will be a series of free physical activity programs delivered at some stage. While the Sons of the West and forthcoming Daughters of the West programs provide a free health and wellbeing program specifically for men and women, there is nothing that caters to families or children in a several week program format.

Continuing this program in some format would be advisable, with the opportunity to be jointly led by Recreation and Community Planning. This could happen in several ways. For example:

- provide the program for a shorter period
- subsidise existing programs to make them free to new participants to trial
- use Neighbourhood Houses as a platform to trial new programs at no cost to participants
- utilise existing sporting avenues with 'come and try' sessions hosted by clubs to boost enrolment numbers
- provide funding to deliver Get Active in the City of Melton program once per year in a similar six week format

A full evaluation report on Get Active was completed in 2016 which supports the continuation of the program.

CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS

Based on the response to the monthly Feeding Your Baby sessions and feedback from participants this would be ideal to continue in some way. This could happen in a number of ways:

- deliver Feeding Your Baby content through the New Parents Groups run by the Maternal and Child Health service
- run one session per new parent group cycle, rotating alternating between a Melton and Caroline Springs location each time
- use a parent educator to facilitate the program, rather than a dietitian, to lower the program delivery costs.

Fussy Eating sessions had far lower attendance, and messages could be delivered via other methods. Keeping information available for community could be done in the following ways:

- distribute Fussy Eating content via various Council Facebook pages
- run one-off sessions as part of other events E.g. Kindergarten Readiness Month in collaboration with DjHS
- make program handouts available through Maternal and Child Health services.

PARENTS AND PRAMS WALKING GROUPS

The Parents and Prams walking groups will remain ongoing throughout 2017, with a number of other days being trialled. The increased promotion through social media has resulted in consistently high numbers and levels of interest, with some participants leading the walking groups even when Council staff are not able to be present. A new group has also started as a community driven initiative by two young mothers, which will now be promoted along with the other existing Council facilitated groups. These groups will be supported by Council's Active Communities Officer.

THE CORNER @ MCKENZIE: COMMUNITY ACTIVATION PROJECT

The Community Activation Project provided a good opportunity to trial various programs and events in the Melton Town Centre space. Now that the Melton Town Centre stage 2 work has been completed, there are great opportunities to continue to activate this space. A final evaluation report of the

EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Keeping health and wellbeing as a focus within events that have a large number of children and families attending is really important to ensuring the ongoing positive influence on children and families within the City of Melton. There are a number of initiatives taking place to influence the offering of healthy food and drink options at Council run events. A number of other changes could take place to support this, including:

- ensure there are no discretionary foods offered for free or sale in event engagements targeting children and families E.g. lollies, sugar sweetened beverages
- provide a budget to offer free fruit and water at relevant child and family focussed events, including Children's Week, Active April and Djerriwarrh Festival Children's Services tent.

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

The remaining school engagement has been passed on to Council's Active Transport & Healthy Families Officer. This includes Transform-Us!, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden and Healthy Eating in Schools Training. It is recommended that holistic health and wellbeing is supported with schools, as they are an important setting for health and wellbeing. This includes:

- providing a range of professional development opportunities for school staff
- host a network meeting for school staff to share ideas and learn from each other
- host information on Council's website about the work local schools are doing to promote health and wellbeing and encourage other schools to access support through Council
- explore a student placement opportunity with a university to support healthy food systems within schools, including canteens and breakfast clubs

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There are a range of free or low cost health and wellbeing development sessions available through government funded organisations. It would be advantageous to set a direction for Children's Services to ensure that at least one health and wellbeing related professional development session is offered each year as part of the Early Years Training Calendar, Family Day Care Network, the Early Years Network, or other forums and workshops that are planned.

These include but are not limited to:

- Healthy Eating Advisory Service
- KidsMatter
- Dental Health Services Victoria

8. CONCLUSION

The HCGT project had a significant reach to a wide range of children and their families, both directly, and indirectly through the settings that they access. The funding provided a low-risk opportunity for Melton City Council to trial a range of strategies to improve the health and wellbeing of children and families across the City of Melton, building an evidence base for effective programs and ways of working.

A large number of both internal Council and external stakeholder relationships were developed throughout the project, resulting in increased opportunities for collaboration in future. There have been a number of strategies that have been implementing within the program and practice of various teams across Council, resulting in ongoing influence to the health and wellbeing of the community in the long term, however some of these are dependent on funding to support this work.

Overall there were positive outcomes for participants, leading to an increase in knowledge, awareness and behaviours related to physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption. It is important to ensure that Council Officers are supported to continue to implement strategies from the HCGT as per the recommendations, to lead to the best health and wellbeing outcomes for the City of Melton community.

APPENDIX 1: HEALTHY CHILDREN GROWING TOGETHER: EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

	INTENDED OUTCOME	INDICATORS OF SUCCESSFUL ACHIEVEMENT
<p>HCGT PROJECT GOAL <i>i.e. what does the program aim to achieve overall in the longer term</i></p> <p><i>i.e. OUTCOME EVALUATION</i></p>	<p>Melton is a municipality where children and their families are informed, supported and encouraged to be physically active and of healthy weight</p> <p>Council is aware and informed of ongoing local actions required to achieve this in Melton</p>	<p>Data on physical activity participation and healthy weight would ideally be available via national, state or local government based data sets/ surveys such as the ABS, the AIHW, the Victorian Population Health Survey, and Community Indicators Victoria, however the timeframes and /or parameters of these do not match project timelines. Melton City Council level data collection that could provide bench marks and ongoing measures appear relatively limited.</p> <p>In summary, the indicators for the successful achievement of this intended outcome will be derived from the indicators/ data generated and collected as described below under the Objectives and Activities section.</p>

HCGT PROJECT OBJECTIVES *	INTENDED IMPACT	INDICATORS OF SUCCESSFUL ACHIEVEMENT
<p><i>i.e. The key areas of activity where HCGT aims to make a difference in the medium term</i></p> <p><i>i.e. IMPACT Evaluation</i></p>	<p>1. Promotion of healthy lifestyles to families & children: Children and families in Melton have raised awareness and understanding of healthy eating, physical activity and healthy lifestyles and translate this into action in their everyday lives</p> <p>2. Implementation of physical activity opportunities for families & children: Increased range and variety of physical activity opportunities available, accessible and participated in by children and their families in Melton in both public and domestic spaces and in formal and informal ways</p> <p>3. Strengthen the capacity of early years health and education professionals: Informed early years health and education professionals who have increased their current knowledge around healthy lifestyle issues for children and families and who increasingly promote, develop,</p>	<p>1. Families and children who receive information and who participate in one-off and multi-session HCGT events report positive impact in terms of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater health literacy (understanding, knowledge of, information about etc), • intention to change behaviour • belief that the perceived barriers to a healthy lifestyle are coming down • changed behaviour <p>2. Physical activity opportunities for families & children in Melton are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal opportunities are increasingly available • reported as being more accessible to families with children • well known to the target population • widely used or attended • informal opportunities are well understood and acted upon • perceived barriers to participation are seen as coming down <p>3. Early years health and education professionals are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confident they are knowledgeable and informed about current healthy messages for children and their parents and ways of delivering these • motivated to implement and pass this information on to children and parents and to implement healthy practices in their particular area • confident they have identified and addressed any barriers to passing on these messages and implementing these practices

	<p>implement and evaluate these through their work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changing the way things are done in their area to maximise healthy lifestyle messages and practices for both children and their parents • report positive impact in terms of the behaviour of parents and children and their adoption of healthy lifestyle practices
	<p>4. <u>Influence Melton City Council policy and planning:</u> Council staff outside of the early years sections understand and take into consideration the needs of children and their families for healthy physical and social environments when developing and implementing local government policy, plans and programs around open space, leisure, recreation, active transport and other relevant areas</p>	<p>5. Council staff in key areas report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of the implications of family and children's needs in relation to land use policy and planning • Increased incorporation of this thinking and awareness into the development and implementation of plans

	INTENDED ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION
<p>HCGT PROJECT ACTIVITIES <i>i.e. what the program will do on the ground in the day to day sense over the next year</i></p> <p><i>i.e. PROCESS Evaluation</i></p>	<p>1. <u>Healthy lifestyle promotion to families & children:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Distribute resources for families, through early years services & community settings, such as libraries & recreation centres ○ Deliver a number of story time themes in the Melton & Caroline Springs libraries, linked with healthy eating & physical activity ○ Run community education sessions on various healthy eating and physical activity topics ○ Put on activities at community events E.g. Children's Week & Djerriwarth Festival ○ Activate local spaces, which may incorporate interactive artwork, activities, and footpath signs ○ Other activities <p>2. <u>Implement physical activity opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consult with children & families around barriers to and supporting factors re participation in physical activity & design ○ Run facilitated physical activity events in local parks and open spaces ○ Disseminate information around informal as well as formal physical activity opportunities 	<p>Number and type of events and sessions delivered</p> <p>Number of children and families/ early years or Council staff attending and their characteristics</p> <p>Number and type of resources developed</p> <p>Number of resources disseminated and to whom</p> <p>Increased understanding of what worked well and not so well and incorporation of this learning into on-going activity planning and delivery</p> <p>See above</p>

	<p>3. <u>Early Years Professionals Capacity Strengthening</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide professional development and training for early years professionals on healthy eating and physical activity ○ Develop and distribute healthy eating, oral health and physical activity resource kits to early years professionals 	
	<p>4. <u>Influence Melton City Council policy and planning:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Liaise / collaborate with policy, planning and program staff in areas of Council such as open space, road safety and active travel; leisure and recreation, community gardens etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of formal meetings held with members of other departments/ sections/teams to discuss children and family healthy lifestyle issues ○ Number of times HCGT/EY staff spontaneously or informally consulted by planners in other areas re healthy lifestyle issues for children and families

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Project Manager data base	Data collected from	Means of data collection
<p>Project data base to hold details of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events (location & focus and attendance) • Participants (age, gender, children's ages etc) and contact details for follow up • What info was sent out to whom 	<p>Families and Children:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants in one-off events or session 2. Participants in several session programs 3. Early Years' service users 4. Families and children in the community at large 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. on the spot feedback sheet 2. before and after participation and follow up 3 months post participation 3. and 4. Potentially could tap into Municipal Early Years Plan data base and MCHN data base to contact & inform families, to ask for feedback at the end of the project delivery
<p>Project data base to hold details of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events (location & focus and attendance) • Participants (age, gender, children's ages etc) and contact details for follow up • What info was sent out to whom 	<p>Early Years Professionals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants in one off events 2. Participants in multi-sessions 3. Recipients of resource kits/written materials etc 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. on the spot feedback sheet 2. before and after participation and follow up 3 month post-participation 3. feedback sheet within resource and/or follow up
<p>Project data base to hold details of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meetings (frequency attendance, minutes etc) • other key stakeholders 	<p>Council Staff</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Control Group 2. Early Years Partnership Group 3. Project Working Group 4. Others key stakeholders 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3. Guide sheet to frame a reflection session on impact at 6 months and outcome at 12 months: focus on achievements and learning, where to from here and recommendations to Council 4. Outline of interview or focus group at end of the project delivery