



Media release

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New movement set to transform food and drink environments for Victorian kids

Vic Kids Eat Well encourages small steps to make big change

An exciting new Victorian-wide movement launching today aims to transform food and drink options in schools and other community organisations in an effort to provide children with the healthy start they need to learn, grow and thrive.

Vic Kids Eat Well will support organisations to take simple, achievable steps, including ditching sugary drinks, boosting healthy food options in canteens and removing unhealthy marketing.

The initiative is supported by the Victorian Government and is delivered by Cancer Council Victoria's Achievement Program, in partnership with Nutrition Australia's Healthy Eating Advisory Service.

Today's launch comes at a time when as much as 41 one per cent of children's diets come from highly processed food¹. Adding to this, over 77 per cent of secondary schools in Australia still sell sugary drinks.²

Todd Harper, CEO of Cancer Council Victoria, said *Vic Kids Eat Well* was about the community coming together to boost healthy eating right from the start so kids could be at their best.

"We all want our kids to attend school, play sport and attend their local community centre free from unhealthy food and sugary drinks. *Vic Kids Eat Well* is supporting schools and other community organisations to make healthier food and drink options front and centre in their canteens, kiosks and vending machines," Mr Harper said.

"*Vic Kids Eat Well* offers support for community organisations to help them adopt healthy changes. For example, a school might select to increase the availability of fruit, while a community centre might choose to refresh the fridge by swapping sugary drinks for water," Mr Harper said.

Lucinda Hancock, CEO of Nutrition Australia said *Vic Kids Eat Well* provides a simple program for schools and other community organisations to support children to live healthier lives.

"As organisations get ready for 2022, there is an opportunity for them to rethink their canteen offerings and switch to healthier food and drink options. *Vic Kids Eat Well* provides the motivation, engagement and support organisations need to make the switch," Ms Hancock said.

¹ Department of Health and Human Services, (2016) [Victoria's Health; the Chief Health Officer's report 2014, State Government of Victoria](#)

² Haynes, A et al, (2020) [Secondary school canteens in Australia: analysis of canteen menus from a repeated cross-sectional national survey](#), Public Health Nutrition

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“For community sport for example, let’s build on the physical benefits of exercise by making it easy for kids to refuel with nutritious food and rehydrate with water.”

Organisations that participate will have access to dedicated Vic Kids Eat Well support staff, practical resources and incentives to celebrate success.

To increase support and action in some of Victoria’s most disadvantaged communities, 13 communities will also have the benefit of a new dedicated workforce of Healthy Kids Advisors. Delivered by the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation and supported by the Victorian and Australian governments, Healthy Kids Advisors will focus on the Vic Kids Eat Well actions, providing boosted hands-on support for healthy eating in the places children spend their time.

Organisations can learn more about Vic Kids Eat Well and sign up at vickidseatwell.health.vic.gov.au

Case study: Dandenong West Primary School available for interview

Dandenong West Primary is one of the first schools to sign up to Vic Kids Eat Well. With the school already taking steps to reduce sugary drinks and leading the way in promoting healthy eating, Principal Bev Hansen encouraged all Victorian schools to join the movement.

“With Vic Kids Eat Well, we’re looking forward to reinforcing healthy eating messages and celebrating our ongoing success with our community,” Ms Hansen said.

“We are situated in one of the most multicultural localities in Australia where 90 per cent of our families speak a language other than English and a third have a refugee background.”

“We’re lucky to have a community hub onsite. We support our families through cooking and shopping programs so they can continue to cook traditional healthy meals. We also provide tips on how to shop for and prepare healthy school lunches with an emphasis on moving away from unhealthy pre-packaged snacks.”

“We removed sugary drinks several years ago and seeing our children more able to focus on learning was very rewarding. Everyone at our school knows we only rehydrate with water.”

- ENDS -

About Cancer Council Victoria

Cancer Council is Australia’s leading cancer charity working across every aspect of every cancer. Every day, we support families affected by cancer when they need it most, speak out on behalf of the community on cancer issues, empower people to reduce their cancer risk, and find new ways to better detect and treat cancer. With your help, we’re getting closer to a cancer free future every minute, every hour, every day. For more information on how Cancer Council helps, visit cancervic.org.au.

About Nutrition Australia

Nutrition Australia is Australia’s leading nutrition non-profit organisation, providing information, education and business-to-business consultation and advisory services to help Australians achieve optimal health through good nutrition. We improve the health of all Australians through public health nutrition and large-scale education initiatives. Our specialised nutrition advisory and support services - combined with scientific credibility, experience and independence – make Nutrition Australia the nation’s foremost voice for good nutrition and healthy eating.

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