



Background paper:

**Selecting interventions to promote vegetables and fruit: summary of current resources.**

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## **Selecting Interventions to promote vegetables and fruit Summary of current resources**

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Much has been done over the past decade in the area of promoting vegetables and fruit, both in Australia and internationally. Much has been learned, from systematic evaluation and experience.

The following is a brief description of some key resources and tools recently developed in Australia.

### **1. An Intervention Portfolio to promote fruit and vegetable consumption: Part 1 - The Process and Portfolio Part 2 - Review of Interventions.**

Hard copies are available from the National Public Health Partnership secretariat or on the web <http://www.nphp.gov.au/signal/priority.htm#vegetables>

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To encourage effective action in the National Priority Area of vegetable and fruit consumption, SIGNAL commissioned a review of the state of the evidence concerning the range of interventions that had been applied and evaluated. At the same time, the National Public Health Partnership requested that its planning framework be tested, by applying the principles in developing a national portfolio of interventions to promote vegetables and fruit. The portfolio development was based to a large extent on the evidence of effectiveness obtained in the literature review. This work took over a year to complete.

The intervention portfolio –now published in two parts, summarises the results of and the process used in a pilot case study that applied a portfolio approach to define interventions at national, state, regional and local levels to promote consumption of vegetables and fruit.

Information required in using the planning framework included: identification and documentation of determinants, potential interventions and quality of interventions.

This information was obtained from:

- two reviews prepared by CSIRO<sup>12</sup>: These reports had been earlier commissioned by DHAC on behalf of SIGNAL .

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<sup>1</sup> 1. Baghurst P, Beaumont-Smith N. The relationship between the consumption of fruits and vegetables and health status. 1999

- a broad-based literature review by consultants
- consultation with stakeholders – national and state levels. (included public health practitioners, representatives of grower groups, retailers,NGOS)
- members of the SIGNAL fruit and vegetable working group

Part 1 of the report outlines the steps in the process of developing the portfolio. Excerpts of Part 1 are included in the SIGNAL FOODChain review (see number 2 below).

Part 2 presents the results of a critical review of the literature concerning the effectiveness of interventions applied in five selected settings:

- Social marketing and community based programs
- Supermarkets
- School-based interventions
- Worksite programs
- Food service settings

- Social Marketing

The most well known is the USA 5 A Day program. This high risk, high gain program has had sustained investment since 1995 and has a strong partnership system. Very reliant on media. See Australian examples below- Health Dept of WA, and Victorian Dept of Health.

- Supermarket Programs.

In the US and Canada, these type of programs, particularly in-store promotions are well documented; (17 reviewed in the portfolio) with degrees of success in changing consumption.

- School-based interventions

A setting where considerable work has been done. Reviewed 23 studies, with 16 focussing on vegetable and fruit intake. Of these 14 achieved some 'positive' effect on intakes.

Elements of success included use of theoretical background, collaborative involvement with school, curriculum development. Long term investment in this type of intervention is vital for sustainability of changes.

In NSW, the successful model is *Tooty Fruity Veg* as described below. Potential for this program to be piloted in other parts of NSW.

- Worksite programs

Few interventions targeting vegetable and fruit consumption. Small but growing number of programs in health promotion in work place settings. Focus is on policy changes to food service

- Food service settings

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<sup>2</sup> Cox DN, Beaumont-Smith N, Baghurst K. An issues paper on barriers to the consumption of fruit and vegetables and previous efforts to promote an increased consumption of fruit and vegetables. 1999 –not for reference.

Interventions focussing on vegetable and fruit intake have been few, but potential to access people normally hard to reach. 'Concentrated' intervention. Focus is on cafeterias/school canteen policies.

## **2. Strategic Inter-Governmental Nutrition Alliance (SIGNAL) Food Chain Issue No 7 Dec 2001.**

This special issue of SIGNAL's FOODChain magazine explores the issue of increasing the consumption of vegetables and fruit. Included are reports on international intervention programs, interventions in the supermarket and fruit and vegetable industries, descriptions of interventions in NSW and other states. Importantly the newsletter gives details as to where people can follow up on the various projects.

Interventions included:

- *Eat Well SA's* nutrition education project, *Creating a Stir*, aimed at supporting school communities to take a hands on approach to the development of skills and sknolwedge in preparation of healthy foods, particularly vegetables and fruit.
- Victorian resource *Filling the Gap* provides practical information and tips to assist parents with young children eating patterns of the family, especially to increase consumption of vegetables and fruit.
- National Child Nutrition Program projects, including the QLD resources of *Children and vegetables – bringing them together*. A project done in collaboration with the Home Economics Institute and Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers.
- *Coles 7-a-day / DAA* supermarket intervention.
- *5 A Day* campaign – US multi faceted campaign.

## **3. Tooty Fruity Vegie Program – NSW**

Based in a regional AHS, a substantive schools-based intervention to promote vegetable and fruit is now in its third year. The program is enhanced by community activities. Process and impact evaluations of selected aspects of the program have been undertaken with positive results.

Elements of the intervention include:

*Kids in the Kitchen* cooking classes, run by parent volunteers, food tastings, gardening. A Project Management Team which includes a teacher, student, parent, canteen worker, community nutritionist, enhances the sustainability and ownership by the school of the project.

The project will be continuing with the schools with support from community and others in the region have asked for the project to be introduced to their school community. There may be potential to learn from this project for selected pilots in other areas of NSW.

## **4. NSW Health Fruit and Vegetable [planning/resource] Tool Kits.**

- a) Fruit & Vegetable Tool Kit: A guide for local tastings events.
- b) Fruit and veg kit for Aboriginal Health

### **a) Fruit & Vegetable Tool Kit: A guide for local tastings events.**

The Fruit & Vegetable Tool Kit (the kit) resource has been widely distributed throughout NSW. With limited resources to conduct a statewide social marketing campaign, a 'hands-on' kit of strategies, activities and resources was developed. This was based on a selected review of the literature and of locally based interventions, as well as consultations with experienced public health practitioners in NSW and Australia.

Due to the lack of documented projects and limited evidence for 'best bet' local interventions, it was decided to develop a kit around tastings events, based on a program (not evaluated but process was documented) *Day of Taste* run in Victoria.

The purpose of the NSW kit:

- Provide practitioners with a user- friendly educational tool to assist in planning, promoting, implementing and evaluating tastings events at the local level.

The purpose of tastings events is to :

- raise awareness of vegetable and fruit consumption/ health benefit issues
- be conducted in all areas of NSW
- be used as a platform to develop new partnerships for more long term strategies and
- be carried out with limited resources.

The kit contains case studies of promotional tastings events activities (some evaluated) and a selection of resources for use in interventions to promote vegetable and fruit consumption at local level.

The Kit is being evaluated by NSW Health. Each of the tastings events run locally are also being evaluated (process and some impact) and these evaluations will contribute to an evidence base on this type of local intervention.

Examples of activities outlined in the case studies:

- BBQ vegetable tasting as part of a local Festival
- Open Farm Day
- Promotion in school canteens
- Shopping centre demonstrations

## **b) Fruit and veg kit for Aboriginal Health 2001**

Compiled by the Mid North Coast Aboriginal Health Partnership in 2001, the kit has had wide distribution in those regions in NSW and Australia with concentration of indigenous populations. The kit was developed to:

- address the need for improved vegetable and fruit consumption in local Aboriginal communities,
- make it easier for health workers to conduct projects to promote veg and fruit consumption
- improve resources for vegetable and fruit promotion

The kit is aimed at Aboriginal health workers, dietitians, people working with Aboriginal health partnership,

The kit contains a manual outlining initiatives, a cookbook, stickers, models, food cards as well as handouts such as recipe cards and fact sheets.

The kit is being disseminated by dietitians via workshops with quarterly follow ups. Evaluation of the kit and dissemination will begin in late 2002.

Initiatives included in the kit include:

- Classroom activities on fruit & veg
- Market tours
- Tasting events
- Cooking classes focussed on fruit and veg.
- Establishing a fruit and veg cooperative

## **5. Health Department of Western Australia/Victorian fruit and vegetable campaigns.**

The Health Department of Western Australia is at the forefront of promotion of vegetables and fruit in Australia. Since 1990, they have committed substantial funding to multi-faceted campaigns. Campaigns have until now, had a key focus on the target segment of children. This campaign developed the recommendations for consumption adopted throughout Australia and has a strong base of evaluation to the elements of the campaigns. The elements include, schools based campaigns such as *Fruit and Veg* week. Developed a mass media campaign, kids cookbook, retail point of sale materials as part of retail campaign.

The campaign is now entering a new phase with focus on adult consumption.

Victoria adopted and adapted this campaign in the mid nineties. While funded, the campaign had a positive impact. But as established, funding was needed over several years to achieve a sustainable change in intakes.

## **6. International Programs**

A number of multi-level, multi-strategy campaigns to promote vegetables and fruit have been and are being conducted and evaluated over the past decade in the USA e.g. US 5-A-Day campaign, the Gimme 5 campaign, etc. These campaigns have

generated considerable literature on “how-to-do-it” effectively. The key evaluations are included in the review of interventions by Miller and Stafford, and there are many more papers that describe the implementation of these programs in detail.

## **7. National Action Plan to Increase Consumption of Vegetables and Fruit**

Following the development of the portfolio of recommended interventions; SIGNAL funded a project to create a national coalition of partners (including government and industry) that would fund and facilitate action to promote vegetables and fruit. The aim of the national coalition, or partnerships is to merge the health interests of the health department and the promotional budgets and frequent promotional activities of industry. The aim of national action is to provide umbrella activities that cannot be undertaken locally, but will support local campaigns and interventions. Details of the status of the national action plan can be obtained from SIGNAL representative, Philip Vita who is responsible for managing this project.

## **References**

1. Miller M, Stafford D. Public Health Planning and Practice Improvement. *An intervention portfolio to promote fruit and vegetable consumption. Part 1 The process and portfolio. Planning framework case study.* National Public Health Partnership Secretariat, September 2000.
2. Miller M, Stafford D. Public Health Planning and Practice Improvement. *An intervention portfolio to promote fruit and vegetable consumption. Part 2 Review of interventions. Planning framework case study* National Public Health Partnership Secretariat, September 2000.