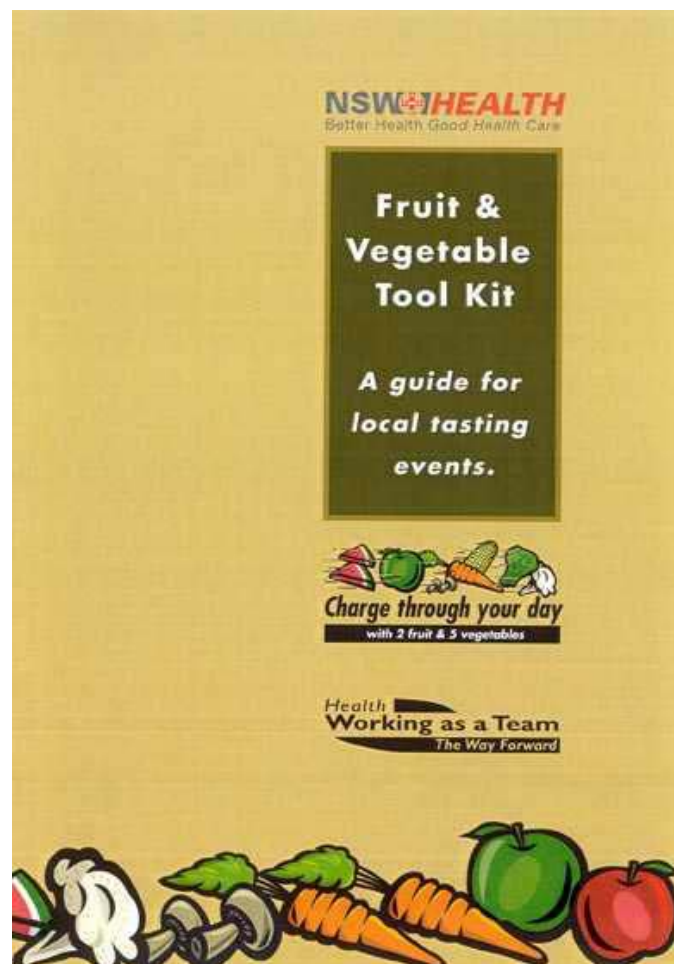


# NSW Fruit and Vegetable Tool Kit

## 2002 Supplementary Grants Scheme Report



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# Introduction

It is clear from national and state nutrition surveys that Australians are not eating enough fruit and vegetables for optimal health. *EatWell NSW Strategic Directions for Public Health Nutrition 2003-2007* (Final Draft January 2002) identifies the promotion of increased consumption of fruit and vegetables as a key priority area. Consuming a variety of fruit and vegetables is important for optimal health and health gains can be made by increasing consumption.

As a first step towards raising exposure to and awareness of the need to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables, the NSW Department of Health funded the dissemination and implementation of the NSW Fruit and Vegetable Tool Kit. The Tool Kit was designed to provide practitioners with a user friendly 'how to' guide to planning, implementing, promoting and evaluating fruit and vegetable tasting events.

The idea of developing a Tool Kit was generated by public health and community nutrition representatives in the NSW Nutrition Network. Members of the Network were enthusiastic to explore alternatives for promoting fruit and vegetables in the absence of a statewide social marketing campaign. In the first instance, the Network decided to focus on demand strategies for fruit and vegetables rather than supply, as this was achievable within existing resources.

A comprehensive dissemination and promotion strategy was developed for the Tool Kit, and included:

- Targeted distribution to individuals identified by members of the Nutrition Network;
- Workshops conducted throughout NSW facilitated by the Nutrition and Physical Activity Branch (NUPA) of the NSW Department of Health and organised by Nutrition Network members; and
- A NSW Department of Health funded supplementary grant scheme to assist practitioners to undertake a tasting event.

The initial components of the dissemination strategy have been evaluated in a previous report: *NSW Fruit and Vegetable Tool Kit Dissemination Strategy and Evaluation Report* (December 2002). This current report evaluates the Supplementary Grants Scheme and represents the final component of the broader evaluation of the Tool Kit.

# Supplementary Grants Scheme

Grants of up to \$2000 each were made available under a supplementary grant scheme funded and administered by the NUPA Branch of the NSW Health Department. Organisations within or closely affiliated with the NSW Health system were eligible to apply, however funding was only allocated to Area Health Services (AHS). Joint grant applications from an AHS and relevant nutrition partners (local councils, Non Government Organisations, schools, fruit and vegetable industry groups, and community groups) were encouraged rather than AHS only applications.

In planning the grants scheme, a minimum of four grants was allocated for non-metropolitan Areas and a minimum of two for metropolitan Areas. By the closing date in December 2001, applications had been received from six non-metropolitan and seven metropolitan Area Health Services. Six non-metropolitan and three metropolitan applications were funded.

The following criteria were used to assess the merits of each application:

- Degree of collaboration between Area Health Services and other partners;
- Clear objectives and target audience;
- Inclusion of a process evaluation plan;
- Consistency with longer-term strategies (i.e. part of a portfolio approach to fruit and vegetable promotion); and
- Value-adding for the Area Health Service.

A total of \$7,800 was awarded to the non-metropolitan Areas of: Macquarie, Greater Murray, Northern Rivers, Mid Western, New England, and Mid North Coast. A total of \$4,200 was awarded to the metropolitan Areas of: South Western Sydney, Hunter, and Northern/Central Sydney.

Each funded project was requested to submit an evaluation report by the end of 2002 outlining:

- Key activities undertaken;
- Evaluation strategies and results;
- Project expenditure; and
- Future directions.

All nine projects submitted an evaluation report and of those, seven worked in partnership with one or more organisations outside of the health system.

# Key activities undertaken

**N.B. F&V = fruit and vegetable**

<b>Area Health Service (AHS)</b>	<b>Event &amp; Major Activities</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Target Group</b>
<b>Greater Murray (GMAHS)</b>	<p>Walkball Festival in conjunction with F&amp;V tastings</p> <p>Partnership model used for event</p> <p>The event was promoted through the media, use of the slogan and via a brochure to Walkball teams</p>	Leeton	May 2002	Adults 50 years and over from local communities
<b>New England (NEAHS)</b>	<p>F&amp;V tasting at Croc Festival</p> <p>Also provided resources and recipe cards, costume member of the F&amp;V Gang</p> <p>Short survey on F&amp;V consumption</p>	Moree	September 2002	Adults & children 0-17 years of age from North West NSW
<b>Macquarie (MAHS)</b>	<p>F&amp;V tastings at an Aboriginal neighbourhood centre and a Community Health Centre</p> <p>Designed to promote partnerships between Aboriginal organisations and dietitians</p>	Dubbo & Brewarrina	January, April & July 2002	Children and adults of the Dubbo and Brewarrina communities
<b>Mid North Coast (MNCAHS)</b>	<p>F&amp;V tastings in conjunction with a Bowelscan screening program</p> <p>Partnership with Cancer Council, promoted event through media, provided resources, and utilised volunteers</p>	Mid North Coast	March 2002	Local communities

<b>Hunter (HAHS)</b>	<p>F&amp;V tastings at an industrial worksite during Men's Health week in combination with Tune Up van offering general health checks</p> <p>Provided information, recipes and access to massage therapist</p>	Newcastle	June 2002	Worksite employees
<b>Northern Sydney/ Central Sydney (NSAHS/CS AHS)</b>	<p>A food preparation and cooking skills course as part of the TAFE Outreach Youth Program</p> <p>Final part of course was for the young people to run their own tasting event</p> <p>F&amp;V tastings at Cellblock Youth Health Service</p>	Crows Nest & Camperdown	Youth Week - March & April 2002	"At risk" and disadvantaged young people
<b>Northern Rivers (NRAHS)</b>	<p>F&amp;V tasting stall at "Beef Week"</p> <p>Utilised volunteers and vegetable costume to promote products</p>	Casino	May 2002	Local communities
<b>South Western Sydney (SWSAHS)</b>	<p>F&amp;V tastings in 3 socially disadvantaged areas of South West Sydney in a shopping centre and as part of local community events</p> <p>Collected data and promoted local avenues for accessing affordable F&amp;V</p>	Warwick Farm, Rosemeadow Ambarvale & Villawood	May 2002	Local communities
<b>Mid Western (MWAHS)</b>	<p>F&amp;V tastings in 6 primary schools for children and teachers</p> <p>Utilised fruit costumes to promote interest</p> <p>Provided schools with a Teacher's Resource package</p>	Mid Western Area	May & November 2002	Primary school children, teachers and canteen supervisors

# Evaluation strategies and results

Grant scheme participants reported using a variety of methods to evaluate the process and impact of their tasting events. The tools used included: intercept survey (interviewers positioned in a public location approach passers-by for an interview), pre and post event survey, capacity building checklist, and a qualitative questionnaire for coordinators and partners involved in the tasting event.

Of the nine projects reported on, seven completed process evaluations of program reach, three completed process evaluations of program implementation and seven completed impact evaluations. These results are described in detail below.

## **Process evaluation - program reach**

Evaluations included the following process measures of program reach:

- amount of information distributed;
- amount of food consumed; and
- media representation.

The evaluations showed that a wide range of printed resources and information was distributed to tasting participants. In most cases, the amount of food distributed exceeded expectation. Most events also utilised local print and radio media to increase the profile of events and community nutrition services available.

## **Process evaluation - program implementation**

Evaluations included the following process measures of program implementation:

- volunteer interest in future event involvement; and
- coordinator perceptions of what worked well and what could be improved about the event.

A number of events utilised the assistance of volunteers. In some cases, the event enabled further recruitment of volunteers for organisations involved. Volunteers and tasting event coordinators provided qualitative feedback about the successes and challenges involved in implementing the tasting events. This feedback provides valuable information that can be used to assist future planning.

## **Impact evaluation**

Evaluations also included the following impact measures:

- knowledge of recommended fruit and vegetable servings;
- consumption of fruit and vegetables;

- like or dislike of food tasted;
- numbers of people who had tried a new recipe; and
- intention to use the recipes provided at home.

On evaluation a high number of participants in the tasting events were unaware of the recommended daily serves of fruit and vegetables. Some projects showed an increase in awareness of recommended servings a number of weeks post event when compared with pre event. However, it is difficult to assess whether this information will be sustained as long-term knowledge.

Three out of eight projects attempted to collect data on fruit and vegetable consumption. Some evaluations showed similar results to those from the 1995 National Nutrition Survey – that on average, people in NSW consume 1-2 serves of fruit and 2-3 of vegetables daily. However, data from other evaluations were of little value as it was clear that participants were unaware of what constituted a serve of fruit or a serve of vegetables. For example, in one instance, a participant stated that he/she ate 40 serves of vegetables a day. Grant scheme participants acknowledged that the results could have also been skewed by a “demand effect” with participants reporting higher consumption of fruit and vegetables than actually eaten to please those collecting the information.

These skewed results may have been due to the fact that an explanation of serving size was not included in the survey questions. The NSW Department of Health recommends using the following questions when measuring fruit and vegetable intake:

1. How many serves of vegetables do you usually eat each day? (a ‘serve’ = ½ cup cooked vegetables or 1 cup of salad vegetables)
2. How many serves of fruit do you usually eat each day? (a serve = 1 medium piece or 2 small pieces of fruit or 1 cup of diced pieces)

(The NSW Department of Health, Measuring key aspects of food habits and food intakes in population based surveys in NSW, 1998)

Evaluations showed that a majority of participants of tasting events reported trying a new recipe and enjoyed eating the fruit and vegetables served. Many evaluations reported a high intention of participants to try new recipes at home, however there was no discussion of how intention relates to actual action and therefore, the limitations of such a question in assessing changes in behaviour. Despite this, the tasting events appear to have created an increased awareness about and exposure to a variety of fruit and vegetables.

## **Capacity Building**

One evaluation also assessed the likelihood of program sustainability using the NSW Health Capacity Building Checklist. – ‘Assessing if a program is likely to be sustained’. Results were positive, with partners keen to continue to be involved and the program showing over 80% likelihood of being sustained.

This highlights how tasting events can be used as a platform to develop partnerships for more long term strategies.

### **Expected and actual outcomes**

There were varying reports of how actual outcomes compared to the planned outcomes. Some projects were able to meet and exceed planned outcomes, while others were unable to meet their initial objectives due to unforeseen circumstances. Many projects identified that better planning, particularly in relation to evaluation tool design and implementation, could have been undertaken to improve the reporting of outcomes.

## **Project expenditure**

The majority of Area Health Services utilised all of their allocated supplementary grant funds. A number of Areas supplemented their budget with donations or other grants. It is also acknowledged that the supplementary grants provided were minimal amounts and that Area Health Services covered much of the work on these projects within existing resources. Areas with money left over identified that they would use the remaining money on future tasting events.

## **Future directions**

The experience and lessons learnt from developing, implementing and evaluating tasting events can be applied to future work. A number of considerations for future work were identified by grant scheme participants, including:

- Further develop partnerships for future community nutrition initiatives. Partners identified include local councils, Department of Sport and Recreation, Non Government Organisations, Aboriginal communities, youth workers, and local employers. There was acknowledgement that working with partners can be challenging due to different objectives for the event. Respondents identified the need to develop skills in dealing with these differences and working together despite them. The evaluations highlight how tasting events can be used as a platform to develop partnerships for more long-term strategies.
- Continue to develop links with established local events to increase the profile and reach of tasting events.
- Put more time and thought into planning and evaluating the event. In particular improve survey methodology in order to collect more relevant and meaningful data.

- Increase community knowledge about serving sizes of fruit and vegetables to ensure accurate collection of baseline consumption data and effective promotion of recommended daily intakes.
- Investigate alternative sources of continued funding.
- Develop the use of volunteers to assist in implementing and evaluating the tasting events. This would require the development of appropriate training for volunteers.
- Incorporate tasting events into other strategies that focus on environments that support health changes – eg. community gardens
- Develop relevant community nutrition resources for distribution at tasting events.
- Investigate linking future tasting events with physical activity initiatives to promote a broader approach.
- Develop further links with local media and use the media more strategically at future tasting events.

# Conclusion

The Supplementary Grants Scheme was one aspect of a comprehensive dissemination and implementation strategy for the NSW Fruit and Vegetable Tool Kit. Dissemination also included targeted distribution of the Tool Kit, and implementation workshops around NSW.

Grants were awarded to proposals demonstrating collaboration with partners, clear objectives and target audience, planned evaluation, consistency with longer-term strategies and benefits to the Area Health Service. Six non-metropolitan and three metropolitan applications were funded, with the majority being done in partnership with non-health organisations.

A wide range of tasting activities was implemented showing that the Fruit and Vegetable Tool Kit strategy is versatile and can be used in many settings and with many different target groups. Evaluations showed that the tasting events provided participants with a new taste experience, which motivated them to try unfamiliar fruit and/or vegetables and new preparation methods. Comparisons of pre and post event surveys showed some increase in awareness of serving sizes but further work in this area is indicated. Evaluations identify local events as good opportunities to collect convenience sample data on fruit and vegetable consumption, however, more thought needs to be given to the design and implementation of the survey questions. Future tasting events may benefit from additional support and expert assistance, for example, from Area Research and Evaluation Officers. Evaluations also showed the importance of working in partnership with local organisations to increase the success and sustainability of fruit and vegetable tasting events.

The Supplementary Grants Scheme encouraged and enabled a number of Area Health Services to utilise the Fruit and Vegetable Tool Kit to plan, implement and evaluate tasting events in their local area, with the aim of raising awareness about and increasing exposure to a variety of fruit and vegetables. Linking this funding with evaluation and reporting requirements also provided participants with valuable practice and experience of designing evaluation tools and reporting on results. This process has provided valuable insights into future work to promote fruit and vegetables.