



FINISH WITH THE RIGHT STUFF

PROGRAM REPORT 2014-2019

NSW Office of Preventive Health





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Finish with the Right Stuff supports junior community sports clubs in New South Wales to encourage children to drink water instead of sugar sweetened drinks while participating in sport, and to provide and promote healthy food and drink options in the sport canteen.

Kids need the right fuel to stay healthy and perform at their best. After the game is over, all their hard work can be undone by loading up on 'occasional' food choices at the sport canteen. So, it's important that sports canteens offer the right stuff for kids to finish the game strong. This gives their body the best chance of recovering and powering throughout the day.

The *Finish with the Right Stuff* program is a free NSW Health initiative that is delivered to junior sports clubs to promote water as the preferred drink and support healthy food options for children and patrons.

The program understands that changes should have little preparation time and not risk club profitability.

Clubs receive tailored, ongoing support from program officers on how to make small, easy changes and access to practical tools, tips, resources and merchandise.

This report provides a brief history of the program, an overview of its aims, context, strategies and outcomes to date.

FINISH WITH THE RIGHT STUFF

ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR



335 clubs have participated in the program so far



Clubs have participated from all **15 local health districts** across NSW



64% of participating clubs are from **regional and rural NSW**

19 sporting codes have been represented, with the largest number from:



Rugby league



Soccer



AFL



Touch football/Oztag



Netball





It's been a fantastic program, watching this club transitioning over the past three seasons...focusing on water straight after play, (and) having tubs of fruit and yoghurt.

Lydia (Parent), Wallsend Junior Rugby League Football Club, Country Rugby League



INTRODUCTION

Healthy eating and active living are essential for better health and wellbeing. NSW Health and its partners are working across NSW to deliver the **Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy**¹ to support individuals and communities to take positive steps towards a healthier lifestyle.

Being overweight or obese as an adult increases your risk of developing chronic disease, including cardiovascular diseases (notably heart disease and stroke), Type 2 diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders and some cancers.² Healthy eating and active living are the key to reducing these risks, and it is in the formative years of childhood that many elements of our attitudes, behaviours and health are established. The World Health Organization therefore describes obesity prevention in childhood as one of the most urgent public health priorities for this century.^{3,4}

To this end, the *Healthy Children Initiative* (HCI) was established to provide a coordinated and comprehensive approach to childhood obesity prevention across NSW.^{5,6} Overseen by the NSW Office of Preventive Health in partnership with Local Health Districts (LHDs) across NSW, HCI invests in evidence-based preventive health strategies that are scaled up to a state-wide level. Flagship programs take a “settings” approach to do this, such as *Munch & Move* in over 3,000 early childhood services⁷ and *Live Life Well @ School* in over 2,000 primary schools.⁸ Working in these settings provides access to large numbers of children, families and communities. Settings provide the opportunity not only to educate people but to empower and enable them to make healthier choices by creating environments that are conducive to good health. Examples include implementing health-promoting policies in these settings, providing training and support for teachers, embedding opportunities for physical activity into the day and providing healthier food choices in childcare menus and school canteens. HCI programs build the capacity of these settings to make these health-promoting actions possible.⁶

Finish with the Right Stuff (FWRS) was developed with the same intent. Junior sporting clubs across NSW are a setting in which large numbers of children, families and their communities come together. Around 63% of children in NSW participate in organised sport outside of school hours at least once a week.⁹ Junior sporting clubs are a setting in which good health is already championed, and as such are a good ideological fit for

the promotion of healthy eating and active living. This also responds to the increasing public awareness of the health implications of overweight and obesity and their increasing demand for healthier food and drink options.^{10,11} Within the junior sporting clubs sector, there are two key opportunities for actions to this end: (1) increasing the proportion of children who drink water rather than sugary drinks before, during and after sport, and (2) improving the availability of healthy food and drink items in junior sports canteens.

Research has shown that there is need, opportunity and – if done the right way – support for the positive promotion of more healthy food and drink options within the junior sporting clubs sector.^{12,13} But a key element of the settings approach is to recognise and respect the context in which programs will be delivered. It must therefore be understood that junior sporting clubs are still, for many people, a setting in which they choose to indulge in “occasional” food and drinks (or “treats”). A heavy-handed approach, such as the complete elimination of occasional food and drinks, would be neither welcome nor appropriate. Clubs rely on canteen revenue to support their operation, so it is important that this not be threatened, nor do we want their staff (many of whom are volunteers) to be subject to public backlash to overly strict new policies. Healthy eating and active living are about finding the right balance, and the right balance is the key to this program. In recent years, NSW Health has developed similar strategies for other settings including health care facilities¹⁴ and school canteens.¹⁵ The learnings from these have provided additional valuable insights to this work.

Participation in organised sports is a great thing for kids, as a regular part of a healthy and active lifestyle. After the game is over, it is important that all their hard work not be undone by loading up on unhealthy food and drinks. This program aims to encourage and enable junior sporting clubs to promote and provide healthy food and drink options, so kids and families can *Finish with the Right Stuff*.

THE PROGRAM

Aim



To encourage and enable junior sporting clubs to promote and provide healthy food and drink options, so kids and families can *Finish with the Right Stuff*.

This includes a focus on making improvements to two key aspects of this setting:

1. To increase the proportion of children who drink water rather than sugary drinks before, during and after sport, and;
2. To improve the availability of healthy food and drink items in junior sports canteens and as provided by coaches and team managers (where relevant to their role).

Partnerships

Partnerships are at the centre of this work. These have included the following.

- Junior sporting clubs and associations across NSW*
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF)
- Australian Football League (AFL) NSW/ACT
- Healthy Kids Association (HKA)
- Local Health Districts (LHDs) across NSW. Hunter New England LHD, Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD, Murrumbidgee LHD and Western Sydney LHD participated in the initial pilot
- Netball NSW
- NSW Office of Sport
- NSW Rugby League / Country Rugby League (CRL)
- National Rugby League
- The University of Newcastle
- Western Australia School Canteen Association Inc

* A note on language throughout this report

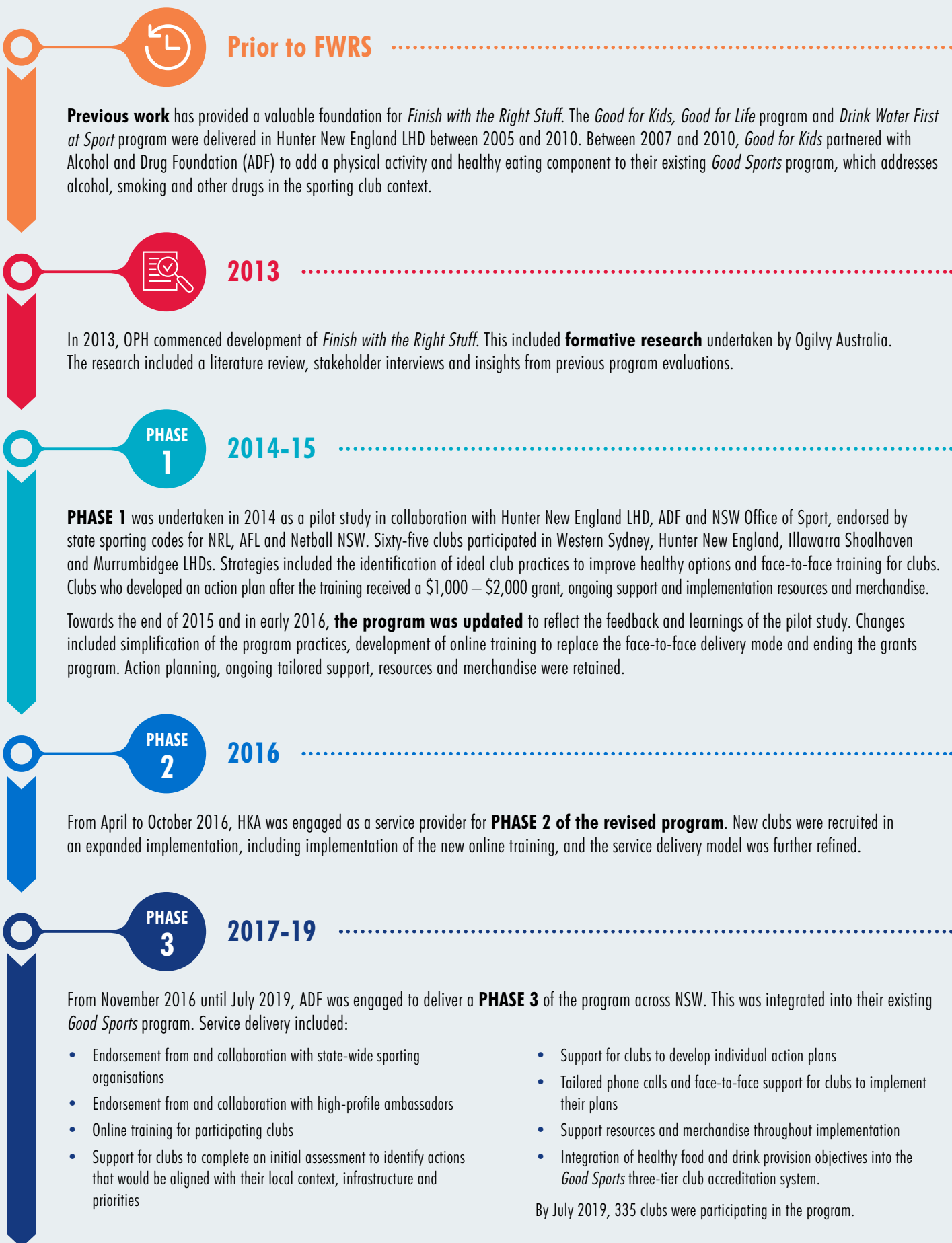
There are junior sporting *clubs and associations* throughout NSW. The structure of these varies – for example, there may be a single association that includes numerous clubs. Some overlap, others may not. For ease of reading, this document refers to all of the above with the simplified term “club”.

The following previous and ongoing programs are acknowledged as having played an important part in the development and delivery of *Finish with the Right Stuff*.

- “Good for Kids, Good for Life”
– Hunter New England LHD
- “Drink Water First at Sport”
– Hunter New England LHD
- “Good Sports”
– Alcohol and Drug Foundation

A timeline of program history

The following provides a brief overview of the program history, with greater detail in the subsequent pages.





PHASE
1

(2014-15)

The first pilot was developed and delivered in collaboration with Hunter New England LHD, ADF, the NSW Office of Sport, Ogilvy Australia and HKA. It was delivered in the Western Sydney LHD, Hunter New England LHD, Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD and Murrumbidgee LHD.

State-level support and promotion for the program was established.

- The program was endorsed by state sporting codes for NRL, AFL and Netball NSW. This involved a partnership agreement formalising their endorsement and role, communication by the state sporting codes to all their associated clubs, and ongoing promotion of the program including a community service announcement, information on websites and social media strategies.
- Ambassadors were engaged to provide high-profile public support for the program. These were Jude Bolton (AFL: Sydney Swans), Kimberly Green (Netball: NSW Swifts) and Nathan Hindmarsh (NRL: former NSW Blues State of Origin player). The ambassadors were featured in a range of promotional materials and participated in some events such as “Right Stuff Days” at clubs.
- Ogilvy Australia was engaged to develop an integrated digital strategy.
- HKA was also engaged to develop content for training and a digital strategy.

Key practices were identified for clubs to audit and take appropriate local action. These were developed in partnership with representatives from rugby league and netball, the NSW Office of Communities, Sport and Recreation, universities and program teams from Hunter New England LHD and ADF. The practices addressed:

- Endorsing a club policy about healthy food and drink.
- The provision of healthy food and drink options in club canteens.
- Promotion, display and communication strategies.
- Food and drink provided by coaches and managers.

Local clubs were approached and invited to participate, with a suite of support strategies as follows.

- ‘Drink Water First at Sport’ training was delivered to coaches/volunteers and “Healthy Canteens” was delivered to canteen volunteers.
- Clubs were supported to develop action plans and were eligible for \$1,000-2,000 grants to support implementation if these were submitted after completing their training.
- Follow-up support included emails, phone contact and a limited number of face-to-face site visits.
- Resources included a range of “how to” guidelines and documents, and various merchandise such as high-visibility vests for coaches, aprons for canteen staff and canteen promotional items.
- The FWRS website and social media sites were established.
- Right Stuff Days were conducted at one NRL and two AFL clubs, attended by program ambassadors.

A total of **65 clubs** registered for the program in Phase 1.

- 55 clubs completed face-to-face training
- 37 clubs completed an action plan and grant process
- Evaluation reported positive attitudes from participating clubs, including a strong commitment to the principles of the program. Training was found to be useful and identified practical issues to be addressed locally. Community reaction was reported to be mixed, however, with scepticism and resistance from parents found to be a substantial barrier. Program delivery logistics such as communication and the action planning process were also found to be difficult for many. Despite this, clubs reported making positive changes to their practice, primarily around the display of food and drink options. The numbers involved in evaluation were too small to draw quantitative conclusions about outcomes but do suggest potential for the future, along with recommendations for improvement.




**PHASE
2**

(April – October 2016)

From late 2015 into early 2016, key stakeholders including participating clubs and representatives from state sporting codes worked with OPH to reflect upon and improve the program.

Key issues to be addressed included:

- Challenges in communicating with clubs and delivering strategies such as training.
- Low uptake of strategies such as the offer of face-to-face contact and holding Right Stuff Days (events).
- Confusion in canteens about categorising the food and drink choices available.
- Finding the right fit with club culture including the value clubs and families place on providing “treats” and identifying actions that would not be seen to threaten canteen profitability.
- Managing conflicting influences such as sponsorship by food and drink retailers.
- Finding alternative strategies (eg changing the proportion, placement and promotion of different food and drink options, rather than removing unhealthy options completely).
- The influence of attitudes and purchasing behaviours of parents (as a barrier to change).

The program was subsequently modified.

Changes included:

- Simplification of the program key practices and the recommended actions to achieve them. These continued to focus on club policy, the coaches and the club canteens.
- A focus on smaller, gradual changes that would be a better fit for clubs.
- Development by Androgogic Educational Technology (Learning Management System provider) of online training to replace the face-to-face delivery mode.
- Ongoing tailored support, resources and merchandise were retained. Local action planning was still supported but was optional at the discretion of the clubs. The grants program was not continued.

Implementation took place between April and October 2016 to implement this revised program.

- The invitation to participate in the program was extended across all LHDs in NSW. HKA was contracted as the primary service provider. They recruited new clubs, provided tailored support to participating clubs and promoted the newly developed online-training.
- Ongoing endorsement was received from state sporting codes for NRL (now represented by the Country Rugby League), AFL and Netball NSW. This included the promotion of the program, general messaging, a promotional video and testimonials on their websites, social media and in electronic communication.
- The ambassadors continued to provide high-profile support.
- Support and follow-up were provided by HKA.

Despite the intended state-wide implementation, the program had lower than expected participation. HKA supported **80 clubs** in total during Phase 2 (37 from Phase 1 and 43 newly recruited clubs).

- HKA reported in their evaluation that the overall engagement with these clubs was problematic. For example, most contacts were unresponsive to attempts by HKA staff to make phone contact (two thirds of the attempts were unresponsive) and there was a very low response rate to email contact attempts.
- Within this limited scope, HKA continued to provide support for clubs. This included promotion of the training, tracking progress on action plans, identifying barriers and assisting with problem-solving, offering to review canteen menus and providing advice to integrate strategies into club policies and guidelines.

Right Stuff Day event.

- Although a small number of clubs did indicate an intention to implement changes, there are insufficient data due to small numbers and poor contact rates to draw any conclusions about changes to club practices during Phase 2.



PHASE
3

(November 2016 – July 2019)

In the third phase of FWRS, a transition was made from service delivery by HKA to a new service delivery arrangement with ADF.

The pre-existing ADF [Good Sports](#) initiative has similar aims (notably within its healthy eating strategies) and has a similar approach to building the capacity of clubs to achieve them. This includes a three-tier club accreditation program into which FWRS actions could be embedded. Therefore, ADF was contracted as the new primary service delivery partner to scale up implementation of FWRS. In this period of service delivery, the public branding of FWRS was less prominent, but the work remained consistent with the aims and capacity building focus of previous work.

The state-wide partnerships and endorsement of the program remained an important component of the work. The three original sporting codes (AFL, rugby league and netball) were joined by a number of new organisations, and by July 2019 clubs from the following 19 codes were involved.

- AFL
- AFL/Netball (joint clubs)
- Athletics
- Baseball
- Basketball
- BMX
- Cricket
- Hockey
- Motor Cycling
- Netball
- PCYC
- Rugby League
- Rugby Union
- Soccer
- Softball
- Surf Lifesaving
- Tennis
- Touch Football/Oztag

Capacity building strategies included:

- Action plans were automatically generated as part of an initial club assessment process, identifying top line action areas for clubs to address. ADF officers assisted clubs with developing specific actions to achieve each top line action area.
- Clubs were offered face-to-face meetings and/or phone contacts from ADF staff, with additional follow-up emails as required. There were 103 face-to-face meetings delivered over the course of the program. There were 314 calls made, averaging 30 minutes each (ranging 20-60 minutes).
- Additional bulk promotional emails to all participating clubs were sent at three points during the program, promoting the online training, directing clubs to the FWRS website and reinforcing key messages.
- Resources and merchandise were co-branded and distributed to clubs to support implementation.
- The FWRS website was maintained and social media strategies continued.
- Ambassadors continued to provide high-profile support for the program. The same ambassadors were used in 2016. From 2017 onwards, new Ambassadors were recruited: Paige Hadley (Netball), Isabelle Kelly (CRL) and Erin McKinnon (AFL).
- ADF staff supported the coordination and delivery of eight Right Stuff Day events, attended by ambassadors.
- ADF staff assisted with FWRS/Good Sports promotional and registration stalls at 13 sports-related events such as competitions, forums, trade shows and conferences. This involved talking with players and representatives from club committees to increase awareness of the program and increase registrations.

A total of **335 clubs** participated in Phase 3, more than four times the previous number. Results are described over the page.

KEY RESULTS FROM PHASE 3



335 clubs
participated in the program

This was **over 4x** the number previously involved



213 clubs
(64%)

were from **regional or rural NSW**

19 sporting codes
were represented



Most commonly represented codes:

Rugby league (75), soccer (60), AFL (44), touch football/Oztag (37), joint AFL/netball (35) and netball (24)

All 15 local health districts



had **clubs participating**

Capacity building outcomes

(from a self-report online survey N=43)



67% (29 of 43) of the clubs reported their knowledge of healthy food and drinks improved from being part of the program

Changes in practice

(from a self-report online survey N=53)



49% of clubs reported that the program assisted them to boost their sale of healthy options (green items in a green/amber/red traffic light system)



37% clubs reported that the program assisted them to reduce their sales of unhealthy food options (red items in a green/amber/red traffic light system)



134 clubs (40%) achieved enough changes in practice to qualify for accreditation



57 clubs achieved **Level 1 accreditation** for the first time

This requires that they provide water and that at least 10% of their food options are healthy, and additional promotion of healthy options is undertaken.

77 clubs achieved **Level 2 accreditation** for the first time

This requires that they provide water, that at least 30% of their food items are healthy options and at least 30% of the drinks space is devoted to healthy options, plus promotion of healthy options is undertaken and coaches/clubs/team managers only provide healthy snacks such as fruit at half-time.

Additional clubs were still working towards accreditation at the time of reporting.



We introduced soups and homemade healthy fried rice to contend with sporting canteen staples like pies and sausage rolls – and they are a hit! Our enthusiastic volunteers are constantly trialling new healthy options and scoping their acceptability among juniors.

AFL Club





Monaro Panthers Football Club (MPFC) is a Premier League club for all ages and ranges of ability from MiniRoos to National Premier League firsts. They have players from Queanbeyan, Canberra, Jerrabomberra, Googong, Bungendore, Sutton, Michaelago and surrounding regions. The club has been going strong since 1967 and they currently have around 900 members. Club President Daniel Watts said they decided to take part in the *Finish With The Right Stuff* healthy eating program as part of *Good Sports*. They'd been making changes to their canteen menu recently and realised it wouldn't be difficult for them to step it up a notch and make a few more changes to make their club canteen even healthier.

Happy and Healthy Members

"Surprisingly, bringing in more healthy options has really helped our club through an increase in canteen sales. I think our members want something a bit more satisfying," he said.

The Panthers still have their old favourites, such as the sausage sanga, but now have new options like a steak salad roll, lean beef burger and veggie burgers. They have moved items such as chocolate bars and chips off the front counter and replaced them with fruit and other healthy snacks.

With the help of the FWRS/GSHE program, the club decided to get rid of all the pastry items as a business decision because handling and storage was a challenge, but their members don't seem to miss them at all. People like the options with salad in them and the lean beef burger is the canteen's new bestselling item.

Switching from large sizes of iced tea and fruit juice to smaller sizes has increased drinks sales. Daniel explained that this is because the juices are more kid-friendly in a smaller package. Families love the low-fat mini flavoured milks too and water is their most purchased drink.

"Previously, I would have said that the lean beef burger was the best out of the new menu items, but I tried the veggie burger last week and I think that's my new favourite!" said Daniel.

Leading by Example

The thing Daniel loves most about the Panthers is the family atmosphere. There are always lots of families around and it's very welcoming. The new canteen items are more appealing to parents and kids too.

"The club committee believes that we are in a position to be an influence on the younger generation. Healthy kids become healthy adults and providing good food choices is just one aspect to a healthy life," said Daniel.

"To young people wanting to eat healthier, I'd say just give it a try. Variety is the spice of life."

LOOKING AHEAD

Significant work has been done in the first three phases of *Finish with the Right Stuff*, with moderate outcomes and important learnings. This setting clearly has promising potential but presents challenges for the future.

Opportunities for action

A decade ago, Kelly et al¹² explored the opportunities for promotion of healthy eating in over one hundred children's sports clubs in NSW and the ACT. They reported that whilst water was the top-selling item in canteens, it was followed by unhealthy sports drinks, chocolate, confectionery and soft drinks, with only 20% of canteens promoting healthy options. Less than five percent of clubs had a written policy regarding healthy food and drink options. The authors concluded that organised sport offers an opportunity to contribute to health promotion goals for large numbers of children and their families.

A follow-up paper by the same research team explored potential priorities for action.¹³ A consensus-generating approach engaged health professionals and experts working in the sporting sector and identified practices such as prominent availability of healthy food and drinks at sports canteens and reduced availability/portion size of unhealthy items as priorities for action.

But can it work? A recent systematic review of the literature confirmed that, despite some evidence of positive impact, the evidence base is still sparse.¹⁶ Results have been mixed.

- Wolfenden et al¹⁷ reported on a randomised controlled trial in 85 amateur community football clubs in NSW. They found that a multi-component intervention can improve the availability and promotion of healthy options and increase the purchase of these products by sporting club members. Importantly, there was no evidence of negative impact on club revenue.
- In contrast, Clinton-McHarg et al¹⁸ reported on a cluster randomised trial across 41 junior football clubs in NSW and Victoria. While the intervention was found to be acceptable, there was no significant difference in policy and practice between control and intervention clubs at post-intervention.

- A randomised controlled trial in Canadian recreation and sport facilities¹⁹ achieved significant improvements in facility capacity, policy development and food environment quality. However, the authors recognised that these food environments remained overwhelmingly unhealthy, suggesting there is substantial work yet to be done.

Although results to date of FWRS have been mixed, there is some evidence of improved practices by participating clubs. Just under half (40%) of the participating clubs in the most recent implementation phase implemented changes to meet accreditation standards associated with healthy food and drink promotion and provision. The most commonly adopted practices related to the provision of water and the promotion of healthy food and drink. Specific actions such as changing the layout and display of their fridge and canteen were reported to be most effective. Clubs also reported that it was generally easier to increase the number of healthy food and drink options for sale than to reduce the number of unhealthy options. Decreasing unhealthy food and drink options was met with resistance due to canteen reliance on these items to generate profit, as well as patron preference for these items while watching games and training. Simple strategies such as adding salad to barbecue options or replacing white bread with multigrain for sausage sandwiches emphasized that changes needed to be gradual to be attempted and sustained.

Junior sporting clubs across NSW provide access to large numbers of children and families⁹ and are a setting in which a healthy lifestyle is already being championed. The potential for valuable outcomes is clear, but the best means by which to achieve them continues to be explored and may include a focus on what support clubs require to implement the program.

Program design: How can we improve the acceptability and feasibility of FWRS?

The scope of work within FWRS is broadly consistent with the recommendations of the formative research described above^{12, 13} and with work being done by others in this area (eg¹⁷⁻¹⁹).

FWRS recommends that clubs:

- Ensure the availability of water
- Provide and promote healthy food and drink options in club canteens, and engage coaches and team managers to do the same where relevant to their role
- Endorse a club policy about healthy food and drink

Whilst these priorities for action are relatively clear, achieving them in a way that is acceptable and feasible is a different matter. A Canadian research team working towards similar goals in similar settings described it as a “tough sell” and cited three key barriers to action:²⁰

- Overcoming cultural norms in the setting (that having something like a hot dog at the game is a nostalgic part of the experience, and this is a place where it should still be ok to have a treat)
- The persisting notion of personal choice and responsibility (that we should just let people choose what they want for themselves, and it's not the club's job to police food and drink choices)
- The fear of financial implications of healthy food provision (potential losses of club revenue)

The results of FWRS confirm that the same barriers exist in our own context. Resistance and scepticism from parents was reported as a substantial issue. In some ways it was easier to engage the state-wide organisations, high-profile ambassadors and local clubs in the principles of this initiative than it was to generate support from the parents who bring their children to sports every week and line up to make purchases at the club canteens. But without this, it may be difficult to maintain the commitment of club management. It was also identified as an issue of concern for the many staff and volunteers who work in those canteens and are, in essence, the public face of this cultural shift in food and drink provision.

Within FWRS, the initial actions were, on reflection, too complicated and lengthy. This evolved over the course of the three phases of program implementation, and input from partners and clubs has been invaluable. Qualitative feedback from club managers and volunteers highlighted the real-world context in which they are working. There were practical concerns about the time that it would take to implement the program, such as whether it would take extra time to prepare healthy food.



“I have a family to run as well as my commitments to the club, so I really struggle balancing everything during the sporting season.”

.....

“I’m the president as well as the canteen manager because no one else would volunteer for that position after the last one left. My husband helps out too but not in an official capacity. We both work fulltime so netball season is always a bit hectic...but we love it.”

The fears of any negative impact on the profitability of club canteens were also strongly voiced.



“Our club committee and canteen manager all seem to be very resistant to implement the learnings from the training. They have a strong belief that if the canteen changed anything that it wouldn’t be sold, and the canteen wouldn’t make money.”

As well as being a source of revenue, club canteens are also seen as a vital component of the club culture that it is important to protect.



“Not only does our canteen raise us money, it also allows us to ensure that we keep in touch with the kids and parents of the club.”



This is not to say that acceptability is unachievable. Previous research in this setting has reported high levels of acceptability within participating club management representatives and parents/carers – although was not necessarily followed by successful change^{18, 21}. Importantly, one study demonstrated that actions can be implemented which improve the availability and promotion of healthy options and increase the purchase of these products by sporting club members without any negative impact on club revenue¹⁷.

Evidence from other programs and feedback collected during our own work continues to shape this program, providing the following valuable insights to improve acceptability and feasibility of the program.

- The sporting organisations, clubs and parents should be involved in program improvements.
- The program actions need to be practical, easy and cost-effective, particularly to ensure feasibility where delivered by time-poor volunteers. There should be a strong emphasis on “keeping it simple”.
- There must be capacity for clubs to apply recommended practices to their own context. Clubs are very different, and the viability of actions will depend on how well they can be made to fit that context.
- Clubs to continue to offer a mix of healthy and “occasional” food and drink options. This is necessary to fit into the culture of clubs: accordingly, this is a setting within which many people still believe that a “treat” of occasional foods is reasonable.
- Clubs need much better up-front clarity about what is involved.
- There should be careful consideration of the timing of implementation, such as engaging with clubs in the pre-season period when it is more practical and there is potential for influence over the coming season’s activities.



Program implementation: What can we do to support clubs?

FWRS is a capacity building initiative. We are aiming to build the capacity of clubs to implement organisational change, and that change is what has the potential to improve the health and wellbeing of children and their families. So we need to not only reflect on what we want the clubs to do, but what we will do ourselves to support them.

Recognising context

*A Framework for Building Capacity to Promote Health*²² was developed by NSW Health in 2001 to enhance the capacity of systems to improve health. It describes methods to support others to achieve sustainable organisational change. This perfectly describes our role in supporting junior sporting clubs through FWRS.

The Framework highlights the importance of first recognising and respecting the context in which action occurs. All capacity is context rich, and strategies and program implementation approaches need to take that context into account. In FWRS, we have learned through the first period of implementation that there are both positive and negative elements of context that can affect program potential. In the positive:

- There is growing recognition of the public health implications of overweight and obesity, giving importance and urgency to this work
- There is increasing social awareness of and community demand for healthy options
- Clubs already promote an active, healthy lifestyle, so this is a good ideological fit
- There is precedent from other settings such as school canteens and health facilities, who have implemented strategies to improve the promotion and availability of healthy food and drink options

All these things provide a strong foundation on which to build this work. But we must also respect the real challenges that exist in this setting.

- This is still an “occasional food” and “treat” setting for many people, so heavy-handed strategies would be neither welcome nor effective
- Program strategies must not threaten club profitability
- Program strategies must respect and support volunteers and staff, particularly those who are the public face of the initiative, such as canteen workers
- Time and cost factors are crucial for feasibility.

This context must be considered when developing and delivering our strategies.

Strategies to build capacity

Key strategies for building the capacity of clubs to implement FWRS practices include the following.²²

- Leadership, at both the state and local level (top down and bottom up)
- Partnerships, across the sporting and health sectors (again with a top down and bottom up approach)
- Organisational development, such as assisting with the development and endorsement of club policies
- Workforce development, such as educational strategies for canteen staff, managers and coaches
- Resource allocation, such as the grants program and supply of promotional materials and merchandise

These strategies have been useful in supporting clubs. Over the course of program implementation, this has evolved and improved as clubs have trialled the practices and provided feedback. This feedback has highlighted the most valued strategies as follows.

- State-level partnerships and advocacy to give the program a high profile and clear endorsement
- Engagement of role models at every level: Ambassadors (state-wide)/coaches and parents (locally)
- Senior buy-in at the club level
- Direct by state sporting organisations to engage and recruit clubs
- Ensuring that the practices are practical, stepwise and promote balance
- Ongoing tailored support to clubs
- Merchandise to support the local promotion efforts, and grants received (Phase 1 only)

Qualitative feedback from the clubs involved confirmed that the tailored support they received was welcome and helpful.

Feedback from clubs has also highlighted the things that will require careful reflection and improvement in the future. Future changes to program implementation should consider:

- More/better strategies to improve recruitment of and engagement with clubs
- Exploring the use of testimonials and possibly mentoring from those involved previously
- Strategies to better engage with parents and overcome their scepticism and resistance
- More/better strategies to improve the relevance of and participation in educational support strategies
- Improved communication between FWRS program support staff and clubs
- Identification and support of a sport club program champion to play a stronger role in local leadership

- Implementing an ongoing quality improvement cycle that will invite feedback from clubs and generate problem-solving and sustainable solutions
- An appropriate evaluation strategy should be developed including appropriate indicators to monitor progress.

To that end, and recognising the learnings, issues and future potential described herein, a simplified framework for building the capacity of clubs to implement FWRS practices is described over the page.



“There is no way we would have made the changes that we did without the calls.”



A FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF CLUBS TO IMPLEMENT FWRS PRACTICES



CONTEXT

Public health implications of overweight and obesity

Increasing social awareness of and community demand for healthy options

Clubs already promote an active, healthy lifestyle: this is a good ideological fit

Precedent from other settings such as school canteens and health facilities

But this is still an “occasional food” setting for many people

Must not threaten club profitability

Must respect and support volunteers and staff

Time and cost factors are crucial for feasibility



STRATEGIES

Finish with the Right Stuff builds the capacity of clubs to implement positive changes

Establish partnerships at the state level

1. Seek endorsement and highly visible support from state sporting organisations
2. Recruit high profile “ambassadors” to endorse and support the initiative
3. Build partnerships with others working in this sector

Identify actions that will be the right fit

4. Co-design acceptable, feasible and appropriate actions for clubs to take

Recruit and engage with clubs at the local level

5. Seek buy-in from senior club personnel
6. Recruit a local champion to drive action

Support implementation

7. Communicate clearly, openly and regularly
8. Inform and educate club staff and volunteers
9. Provide ongoing tailored support to clubs
10. Provide resources and merchandise to support implementation



CAPACITY

Leadership and culture

Policy and infrastructure to support positive change

Evidence of problem-solving to take action



CHANGE

Implementation of FWRS practices including availability of water, promotion and provision of healthy food and drinks and adoption of healthy club policies...

... so that kids can

FINISH WITH THE RIGHT STUFF

Playing our part in the big picture

The opportunities and potential outcomes of this work justify ongoing investment, but we recognise that this is a difficult setting with complex issues to be overcome, and FWRS must continue to improve both program design and implementation in partnership with the junior sporting club sector. A stronger focus on both quantitative and qualitative evaluation can then contribute to this growing evidence base.

A broader context must also be acknowledged. FWRS is only one part of a major cultural shift that is underway across our communities. The emergence of childhood overweight and obesity as major public health issues have a profound scale that extends well beyond junior sporting fields. This was reflected in comments received from participants.

Major cultural issues cannot be overcome by any single program. Change will only be achieved through multiple, coordinated strategies. Attitudes must be challenged by healthy eating and active living campaign strategies such as [Make Healthy Normal](#)^{11, 23}. Settings approaches such as the [Munch & Move](#) program in early childhood services^{6, 24} and [Live Life Well @ School](#) in primary schools⁸ must influence the knowledge, attitudes and health behaviours of children from a young age. Changes to food provision must be

championed and proven to be possible and effective across multiple settings, including the work being done by the [NSW Healthy School Canteens Strategy](#)¹⁵ and the [Healthy Food and Drink in NSW Health Facilities for Staff and Visitors Framework](#).¹⁴

This combined effort is what will bring about change for the long term. Swapping out white bread for multigrain in the sausage sizzle every Saturday afternoon at the footy or offering the kids water instead of a sports drink during halftime at netball may not seem like a huge difference, and in truth that alone will not change the BMI of any child. But it isn't expected to. These actions are important cogs in a much bigger wheel that will turn our communities back towards a lifestyle where *Healthy Eating and Active Living* are the norm.



“The retailers these days have a lot to answer for too (because of this, people really need to be educated and know what is good for them, so they don't get fooled by the marketers). We have lost the whole culture of these sweet foods being special treats and only to be eaten occasionally because it is always available now.”

“Needed to go softly, softly, softly; not often do you have the momentum to make seismic changes when it comes to things like these. We live in a sugar-saturated world and it is not easy for people to make these changes we are wanting them to make.”



The *Finish with the Right Stuff* program gave our committee the confidence to implement changes that we all knew were beneficial for the kids playing our sport.

Tracey (Club President), Wollondilly Redbacks AFL



SWAP CHIPS



FOR POPCORN

SWAP BACON



FOR MINUTE STEAK

SWAP CHOCOLATE



FOR FRESH FRUIT

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