



**ACT**  
Government

*fresh*  
**TASTES**

# Fresh Tastes

**Strategies to support the creation  
of a healthy food and drink  
culture in ACT schools**





**ACT**  
Government

*Fresh Tastes: healthy food at school* is a joint Australian, State and Territory Government initiative under the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health.

# The ACT Government is working in partnership with:



Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE



ACT Council  
of Parents  
and Citizens  
Associations

the  
power of  
humanity



**Fresh Tastes welcomes more  
partnerships into the future.**

## Contents

Foreword	4
Introduction	6
The vision	8
Why promote healthy food and drinks for children?	10
Why promote a healthy food and drink culture in schools?	12
The Fresh Tastes approach	14
Involving families	16
Consultation	17
Fresh Tastes in action	18
Action areas	21
Partners	30
The big picture	32
Where we are now	36
Where we want to be	37
References	38

Schools refers to public, Catholic and independent schools educating students from preschool to year 6.

# Foreword



**Katy Gallagher, MLA**  
Chief Minister  
Minister for Health



**Joy Burch, MLA**  
Minister for Education  
and Training

## **There is no better stage of life to learn the habits of a healthy lifestyle than childhood. Yet children in the ACT - despite enjoying relatively good health - show increasing rates of obesity and overweight.**

One out of four year 6 students are now overweight or obese and there is a growing number in kindergarten. While these rates remain much lower than those of the adult population, the life-long consequences of poor diet and health in children demand that we – as government, schools and the broader community – take action now to reverse this trend.

What children eat and drink lies at the heart of the challenge. Many children – including more than two out of three year 6 students – are not eating enough vegetables each day for good health, growth and development. Given the prominent role of schools in providing and teaching young people about food they are a vital part of the solution. The ACT Government has set a target of zero growth for obesity in the ACT through our Healthy Weight Initiative and action in schools is a high priority.

Fresh Tastes is designed to give ACT school students the opportunity to learn about the importance of good nutrition for good health. Where it differs from past programs is in the practical support it offers preschools, primary schools and early childhood schools to teach these skills in fun, hands-on and practical ways. It also takes action in the key areas which influence the food and drink culture in our schools, including what's for sale in school canteens.

Evidence shows that a substantial contributor to obesity in children is excess consumption of sugar sweetened drinks. Fresh Tastes is being delivered together with a phasing out of the sale of sugary drinks in ACT public schools, and new water refill stations and reusable bottles to make it easier for students to drink water.



**We know that children who eat well are better placed to participate and succeed at school.**

We aren't starting from scratch. We already have award winning school canteens serving no red (unhealthy) foods, schools teaching the importance of nutrition and using their gardens to teach children how to grow vegetables and fruit. Fresh Tastes aims to extend this approach across the ACT so more children can benefit from these activities – to make healthy food and drink a feature of everyday life. Aside from the lifelong health benefits, we know that children who eat well are better placed to participate and succeed at school.

The ACT Government is pleased to partner with the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations and leading local businesses and community organisations which are passionate about children's health to deliver Fresh Tastes. These partners will provide a range of resources and discounts to schools and parents to help make healthy food and drinks more easily available. They will also help take the messages of Fresh Tastes beyond our schools and into homes.

The stakes in this challenge are extremely high. It's in the interest of every government, school and parent that we make a lasting contribution to the lifetime health of our children and spare them the chronic disease burden and financial costs which our society will face unless we stem the growing rates of obesity. The quality of lives the next generation will lead depends on us making these vital changes now.

*Katy Gallagher*      *Joy Burch*

**Katy Gallagher, MLA**  
Chief Minister  
Minister for Health

**Joy Burch, MLA**  
Minister for Education  
and Training

# Introduction

## The ACT Government is committed to improving children's health with a focus on improving healthy weight.

Fresh Tastes: healthy food at school (Fresh Tastes) is one of several programs to be delivered under the ACT Healthy Children's Initiative. It is funded by ACT Health and the Australian Government National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health (NPAPH) to improve health outcomes for children and their families.

Fresh Tastes has been developed through a partnership between the Health Improvement Branch, ACT Health and the ACT Education and Training Directorate.



**Fresh Tastes is about embedding a culture of healthy food and drinks in ACT schools.<sup>i</sup> Schools will be supported to do this by creating a supportive environment that:**

- helps students, staff and families make healthy food and drink choices;
- encourages students to have a positive attitude towards healthy food and drinks;
- improves the skills of students and families to choose and prepare healthy food and drinks; and
- makes healthy food and drinks more available and visible in schools.

*i. For the purposes of this document, the term 'schools' refers to public, Catholic and independent schools educating students from preschool to year 6, unless otherwise specified. This includes early childhood schools, preschools and primary schools.*

Public, Catholic and independent schools are welcome to participate in Fresh Tastes. Schools that participate in Fresh Tastes are encouraged to work together with the ACT Government and Fresh Tastes partners (including local community organisations and businesses) for three years to embed a healthy food and drink culture.

Schools will undertake activities from the following six action areas: Healthy Food and Drink Guidelines; Food for Sale; Classroom Learning; Cooking Food; Growing Food; and Food from Home. Participating schools will have access to services, resources and incentives to give them the best chance of achieving against the action areas.



The six Action Planning Guides in Fresh Tastes

Fresh Tastes has been designed using the latest evidence on how to promote healthy eating. Key government, community and business stakeholders with backgrounds in nutrition, education, health promotion, behaviour change, food service and gardening have contributed to the development of the program. This has resulted in a flexible, comprehensive package to support school communities to build on their strengths.

Fresh Tastes is an expansion of the former Healthy Food@School program that supported ACT school canteens to implement the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*. Evaluation of the outcomes for this program recognised that focussing on school canteens alone will not make a substantial difference to children's health. This is because food and drinks for students also comes from other sources.

Fresh Tastes will continue to support all ACT school canteens to provide healthy food and drink options through Canteen Fresh ACT, a part of the Food for Sale action area.

In addition to this, Fresh Tastes will work closely with the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations to introduce a number of measures that support canteen operations to be sustainable.

Fresh Tastes will be piloted in schools across Canberra from early 2014 and will roll out in more schools from late 2014.

This document describes Fresh Tastes and what is on offer to schools, and outlines the policy context and rationale for the program.

# The vision



**The ACT Government has set a target of zero growth for obesity through the Healthy Weight Action Plan. Action in schools is a high priority, and the ACT Government is committed to creating a vision of a healthy food and drink culture in ACT schools.**

**To help achieve this vision, schools will select from a range of actions to:**

- provide tasty and healthy food to students;
- provide opportunities for students to prepare and cook healthy, tasty food;
- provide opportunities for students to grow and harvest food through school gardens;
- promote tap water as the drink of choice; and
- provide healthy food that is environmentally sourced.

Schools will be supported in this vision through the Fresh Tastes program. Public schools will be supported through developing and implementing the *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy*.<sup>i</sup>

The vision contributes to improving children's eating habits through canteens, food education and school gardens.<sup>19</sup>

There are a number of other ACT Government and community initiatives and programs underway that will also contribute to this vision. Further details are outlined on page 34.

*i. To be introduced by the ACT Government in 2015.*





# Why promote healthy food and drinks for children?

**The number of overweight children in Australia has doubled in recent years, with a quarter of all children considered overweight or obese.<sup>1</sup>**

In the ACT, 25% of year 6 students are classified overweight or obese, with this proportion unchanged from 2006.<sup>2</sup> Since 2008, the number of kindergarten children in the ACT who were measured as overweight or obese has increased, suggesting an upward trend in obesity in young children.<sup>2</sup>

Overweight or obese children are likely to remain overweight or obese into adolescence and adulthood<sup>3</sup> and, as a result, are at greater risk of developing a range of chronic diseases in adulthood.

A number of factors have contributed to the rise in overweight and obesity in children, including lack of physical activity, increased sedentary behaviour, unhealthy food choices, peer and family eating habits, increased portion size and consumption of sugary drinks. As a consequence, it is vital that we work with all children to have a healthy lifestyle and promote good health for all.

**Overweight or obese children are likely to remain overweight or obese into adolescence and adulthood.**



Many children in the ACT are not eating sufficient vegetables and fruit for good health. In 2009, fewer ACT year 6 students (31%) reported eating sufficient serves of vegetables a day compared to 2006 (41%).<sup>2</sup>

Children need the right types of foods that include vegetables and fruit so they grow, develop, learn and play to their full potential. They need to learn healthy eating habits from an early age to set them up for life.

Almost one half (49%) of ACT children consume soft drink, cordial or sports drink each week with 20% drinking six or more cups of these sugary drinks each week.<sup>4</sup> Children need to drink water rather than sugary drinks. Drinking water can hydrate the body, help the body function and grow, keep teeth clean and strong, and help maintain a healthy weight.<sup>5</sup>

Tap water is the preferred source of water in the ACT as it is a good source of fluoride for dental health. The processing, manufacturing, distribution and disposal of soft drink or water containers can take its toll on the environment.<sup>6</sup> Schools will be encouraged to promote tap water and refillable bottles instead of selling or providing drinks high in sugar.

The food industry spends millions of dollars each year marketing food and drink products to children, many of which are nutrient poor. Schools will struggle to compete with this so it is vital that a range of measures are put into place to make healthy choices the easy choices for students, and where possible, their families.

**Children need the right types of foods so they can grow, develop, learn and play to their full potential.**



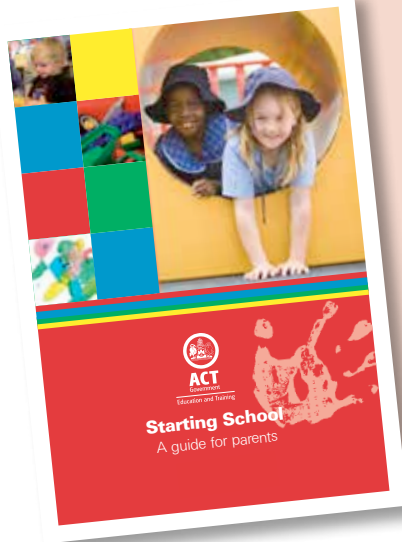
# Why promote a healthy food and drink culture in schools?

**Evidence strongly supports the promotion of healthy lifestyles to families with children, particularly through the school setting.<sup>7</sup>**

Childhood is considered to be the most important phase of development and can have the greatest life long impact on a person's wellbeing.<sup>8</sup>

Childhood is when attitudes to food and eating behaviours are formed; to a large extent these attitudes are shaped by parents, primary carers and the media.

Once a child begins school and becomes part of a new community, the school environment plays a role in influencing children's food preferences and views about food.



**“Participation in school activities will burn up children’s energy and a hungry child will lose concentration and become tired.”**

Starting School – a guide for parents

When a child starts childcare or school, this also presents an important opportunity for families and children to establish healthy routines and behaviours.<sup>18</sup> At these times, preschool and kindergarten families in particular, will look for tools and turn to their peers to guide decisions. One such tool is the ACT Education and Training Directorate's *Starting School: A guide for parents*.

The school setting can support families and children to have healthy lifestyles by providing leadership and promoting a healthy food and drink culture.

Australian children aged 5–16 years consume 32% of their total energy needs during school hours through meals, snacks and drinks.<sup>1</sup> This will either be food and drinks brought from home, purchased in the canteen, or provided through other school activities such as catered events or classroom activities.

Children who have a healthy diet are better placed to learn, participate and attend school.<sup>14,15,16</sup> They can also have improved levels of concentration, behaviour, self confidence and immunity from disease.<sup>17</sup>

There is evidence, both from Australia and overseas, that school nutrition programs which take a whole of school approach, with strong leadership and community partnerships, can have the greatest impact on improving children's eating and drinking habits.<sup>4,10,11,12</sup>

Locally, an evaluation of the ACT school canteen program, formally known as Healthy Food@School, identified that school healthy food initiatives beyond the canteen can influence attitudes and behaviours of the school community, especially around acceptance of healthy menu changes in the canteen.<sup>13</sup>

**Children who have a healthy diet are better placed to learn, participate and attend school. They can also have improved levels of concentration behaviour, self confidence and immunity from disease.**

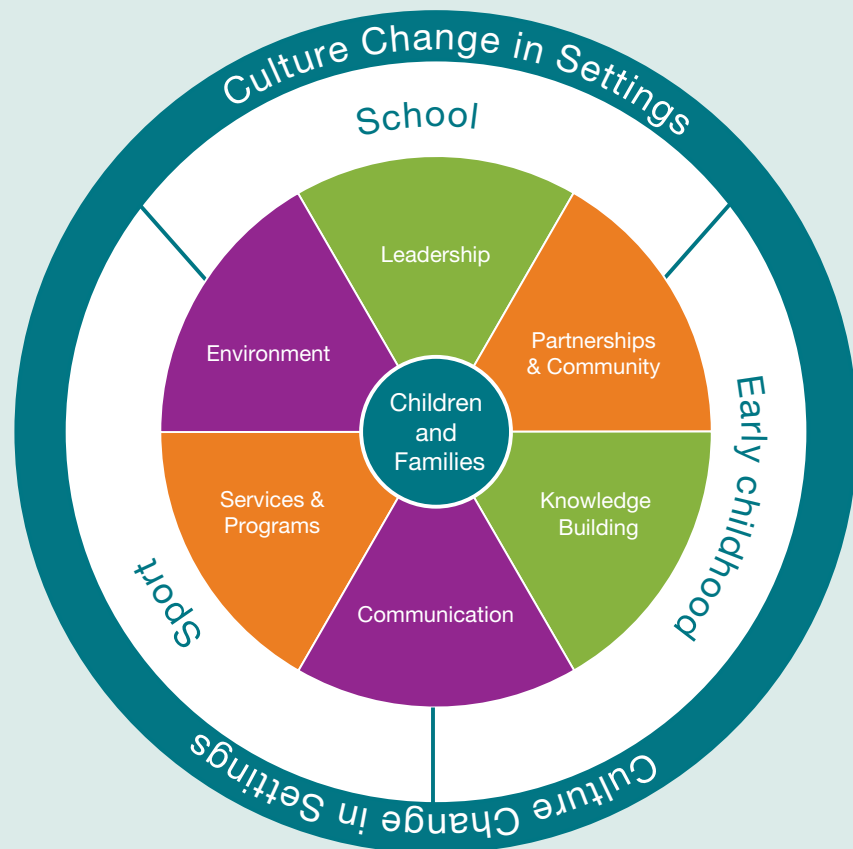


# The Fresh Tastes approach

**Fresh Tastes will take a whole of school approach to create and sustain a culture of healthy food and drinks.**

The model of culture change illustrated on the right underpins programs that are part of the ACT Healthy Children's Initiative.

**Model of culture change**





## The 8 Fresh Tastes Principles

Fresh Tastes has eight principles to help schools maximise opportunities against sections of the culture change model. Schools are encouraged to have these principles in mind when they select, plan and implement activities.



# Involving families

## Settings and environments where children interact are known to be key influences on parents<sup>i</sup> attempts to provide a healthy lifestyle.<sup>20</sup>

Parents are key to influencing and making changes, however evidence shows that parents would like the settings where their children go (e.g. schools) to promote the same messages. Families will be supported in Fresh Tastes to reinforce student learning at home.

The ACT Education and Training Directorate is committed to strengthening parental and community engagement in all areas of education. There will be an expectation that all schools will develop strategies to strengthen this partnership. The Australian Government's *Family-School Partnerships Framework: A guide for schools and families* supports schools in this endeavour.

Each school is unique and will know the best ways to engage families based on the needs of the school, the parents and available resources.

*i. For the purposes of this document the term parent/s includes primary carers.*

**Families will be supported and encouraged to be involved and reinforce student learning at home.**



# Consultation



## **ACT Health and the ACT Education and Training Directorate have worked together to develop the suite of action areas within Fresh Tastes.**

In 2012, the Health Improvement Branch consulted with teachers in 15 ACT schools asking for input into the development of Fresh Tastes. Results indicated that a number of schools are already doing excellent work in the area of promoting healthy food and that a new program would allow schools to build on their strengths and offer flexible, adaptable activities.<sup>22</sup>

Teachers described schools as very busy environments and suggested a program to focus on healthy food and drink must be simple and provide resources linked to the Australian Curriculum that teachers can easily use in the classroom. Schools were most interested in gardening and cooking activities. Acknowledging that not all schools have the skills and capacity to undertake these activities, additional support would be necessary to increase teacher capacity.

Teachers supported the idea of having a school working group to help them guide the direction of priorities for Fresh Tastes activities, and agreed that this leadership would also give their program additional credibility. Many schools agreed that a focus on younger students would be a priority to embed a new culture.

The Health Improvement Branch surveyed 100 young people to inform Fresh Tastes. Respondents agreed that eating healthy food was important, and they would find it easier to eat healthier if it was cheaper, they had easier access to it and if they had the skills to prepare healthy food.<sup>22</sup>

Schools participating in Fresh Tastes will be encouraged to consult with their students when designing activities for each action area to ensure student involvement.

# Fresh Tastes in action



**Schools will be encouraged to choose their own activities over three years.**

## **School participation**

Schools will be encouraged to choose their own activities over three years. It is expected that activities to maintain a healthy food and drink environment will continue long beyond the life of Fresh Tastes. Schools will be invited to submit an expression of interest to participate in the program.

## **Shared leadership**

Schools will work in partnership with teachers, parents, canteens, preschools, and community partners. The Principal's support is pivotal in guiding school activities to ensure Fresh Tastes has long term impact. The Fresh Tastes team (Health Improvement Branch, ACT Health) will help guide and support the school.

## **Planning workshops**

For each year of involvement, the Fresh Tastes team will facilitate planning workshops with schools to identify one or two action areas the school will prioritise. Schools will identify what they want to achieve and how they will get there. Participating schools will be able to access services, resources and incentives offered by partners to achieve their goals.



**Schools are encouraged to involve the whole school community along the way for the best chance of success.**

### **Implementation**

Schools will implement activities to achieve their goals throughout the school year. The Fresh Tastes team and partners will provide ongoing support to schools during their involvement.

Schools are encouraged to involve the whole school community along the way for the best chance of success. Support of the school Principal and the School Board is crucial, with others from the school and local businesses as key allies.

### **Information sharing**

Schools have the option to "buddy up" with other schools through an online forum and annual workshops. The forum and workshops will help schools exchange ideas, experiences and insights and work in a collaborative way to solve problems and develop strategies.

### **Support for all schools**

Schools that don't want to formally participate in Fresh Tastes but want to promote healthy food and drinks will be able to visit the Fresh Tastes website to access reference materials and resources. Any school can access the Canteen Fresh ACT services to assist school canteens to implement the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*.



# Action Areas

**Fresh Tastes has six action areas to support schools to achieve a healthy food and drink culture. They are:**

1. Healthy Food and Drink Guidelines
2. Classroom Learning
3. Food for Sale
4. Growing Food
5. Cooking Food
6. Food from Home

**Schools will set their own goals and activities for each action area for the year ahead.**

Action areas have been designed to complement and contribute to other action areas. Schools will choose one or two action areas to focus on each year. Schools will set their own goals and activities for each action area for the year ahead.

The following pages describe each action area and how schools will be supported to implement activities. Further information can be found in the *Fresh Tastes Action Planning Guides*, provided to participating schools.



# Action Area 1: Healthy Food and Drink Guidelines



**Healthy Food and Drink Guidelines** aims to support schools to develop and implement their own **Healthy Food and Drink Guidelines** for their whole school environment. Public schools will be supported to align their Guidelines with the *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy*<sup>i</sup>.

Most jurisdictions across Australia have whole school food and drink policies in place to guide schools on suitable food and drinks, so this action area will bring ACT schools into alignment with other jurisdictions.

Healthy Food and Drink Guidelines can address a range of school activities from the food and drinks supplied in the school (e.g. canteen, breakfast club or after school care), to classroom activities, gardening and cooking experiences, food brought from home, events, rewards and fundraising activities.

Some schools will develop Guidelines at the beginning of their three year involvement. Others may choose to implement other action areas first then work towards developing Guidelines.

## Schools<sup>ii</sup> that select this action area will have access to the following:

- two water refill stations, as well as a reusable bottle for every student<sup>iii</sup>;
- discounts for families to purchase fruit and vegetables from partnering businesses; and
- training for the school community on a traffic light food system to assess the nutritional value of food and drinks.

i. To be introduced by the ACT Government in 2015.

ii. Only those schools signed up to Fresh Tastes will be eligible for the incentives.

iii. This offer is available under two action areas, however, schools will be eligible once only. The water refill stations are limited to ACT public primary schools only, provided under the ACT Government's 2013-14 Budget.

## Action Area 2: Classroom Learning

**Classroom Learning** aims to increase teachers' capacity to deliver nutrition education in the classroom.

Schools that implement this action area will embed activities and experiences for students around food, nutrition, health and the environment in the classroom. Classroom Learning links closely with activities offered through other action areas, in particular Growing Food and Cooking Food. This approach will reinforce and deepen students' knowledge and skills around food and nutrition.



**This approach will reinforce and deepen students' knowledge and skills around food and nutrition.**



**Schools<sup>i</sup> that select this action area will have access to the following:**

- professional development for teachers delivered by nutrition professionals using Nutrition Australia's Food&ME program, which includes lesson plans mapped to the Australian Curriculum;
- a set of Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program *Tools for Teachers* resources and lesson plans mapped to the Australian Curriculum;
- discounts for families to purchase fruit and vegetables from partnering businesses; and
- training for the school community on a traffic light food system to assess the nutritional value of food and drinks.

i. Only those schools signed up to Fresh Tastes will be eligible for the incentives.

## Action Area 3: Food for Sale

**Food for Sale aims to ensure that food and drinks sold to students by the school, including through the canteen, fundraising activities and school events, meet the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines (NHSCG)*.**

Schools working in this action area will focus on switching their canteen to a more nutritious menu by implementing the NHSCG. *The NHSCG* provide a nationally consistent traffic light system of food and drinks that are suitable in the school environment every day (green), occasionally (amber), and not at all (red).

School canteens are required to register as a food business in accordance with the *Food Act 2001*.

In working towards a healthier menu, Fresh Tastes acknowledges that school canteens need to remain financially viable. Fresh Tastes will work with the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations' Canteen Support Service to introduce a number of measures that support canteen operations to be more efficient in business practices; for example, online ordering systems.

As part of this action area, schools will also be encouraged to introduce healthy fundraising alternatives, find ways to promote tap water

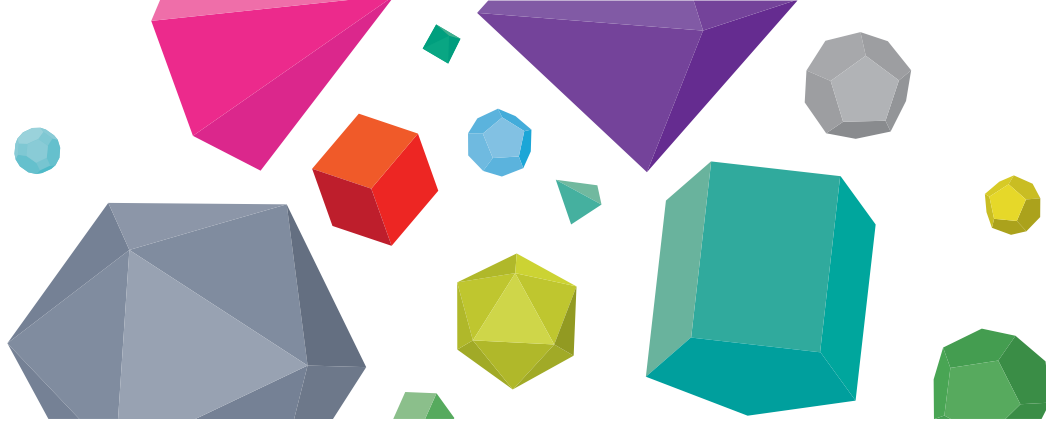
instead of selling sugary drinks, and provide healthy food and drink alternatives at school events.

### **Schools<sup>i</sup> that select this action area will have access to the following:**

- two water refill stations, as well as a reusable bottle for every student<sup>ii</sup>;
- priority access to *Canteen Fresh ACT* which includes:
  - initial and follow up canteen menu reviews with recommendations on how to implement the *NHSCG*;
  - access to a specialist canteen advisory service for ongoing support;
  - subsidised canteen manager training for schools that undertake a canteen menu review;
  - regular canteen newsletters and information sharing events.







- priority access to the Canteen Support Service from the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations <sup>iv</sup> ;
- wholesale discounts for canteen produce;
- a book of fundraising ideas; and
- training for the school community on a traffic light food system to assess the nutritional value of food and drinks.

- Only those schools signed up to Fresh Tastes will be eligible for the incentives.
- This offer is available under two action areas, however, schools will be eligible once. The water refill stations are limited to ACT public primary schools only, provided under the ACT Government's 2013-14 Budget.
- All schools in the ACT can access Canteen Fresh ACT services, regardless of participation in Fresh Tastes.
- The ACT Government has commissioned the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations (for 2014) to deliver a range of measures to support canteens to strive and maintain financial viability. All ACT public schools can access assistance of the Canteen Support Service; regardless of participation in Fresh Tastes.

**Schools that implement this action area will focus on switching their canteen to a more nutritious menu.**



## Action Area 4: Growing Food



**Growing Food aims to provide children with hands-on opportunities to grow and harvest vegetables and fruit.**

School gardens are an excellent teaching resource, provide an opportunity for physical activity, teach children about good nutrition, motivate children to try new food, foster respect for the environment, and stimulate social interaction and communication skills.

School gardens can be as simple as growing a few herbs or lettuce in containers to having a dedicated site on school grounds.<sup>12,21</sup>

For some schools this action area may mean developing a kitchen garden from scratch; for others it may mean expanding or maintaining an existing garden. Activities for students can be designed around involving them in all parts of the gardening process from planning, building, caring, harvesting, cooking and recycling.

Growing Food activities can link directly with activities planned for either the Cooking Food or Classroom Learning action areas.

**Schools<sup>i</sup> that select this action area will have access to the following:**

- gardening advice to assess garden needs and develop a plan for a school kitchen garden;
- follow up gardening advice;
- gardening supplies and equipment;
- family gardening workshops and advice; and
- assistance with the application process to become part of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program.

i. Only those schools signed up to Fresh Tastes will be eligible for the incentives.

## Action Area 5: Cooking Food

**Cooking Food aims to provide students and families with practical experience to prepare and try healthy foods.**

Cooking is an important life skill. Schools that integrate cooking into school life can provide students with hands on experiences to explore new foods and prepare nutritious foods from fresh produce.

Students of all ages and abilities can find cooking an engaging, stimulating and inclusive activity. Cooking can support many different aspects of the curriculum and can teach children to make wise food choices that positively affect their health and wellbeing.

Cooking at school is a great way to involve parents in the school community and can have a positive impact on the family.

Cooking Food activities can link directly with activities planned for the Classroom Learning or Growing Food action areas.

i. Only those schools signed up to Fresh Tastes will be eligible for the incentives.



### **Schools<sup>i</sup> that select this action area will have access to the following:**

- specialist advice on cooking with children at school and support to plan and deliver hands on cooking activities for students;
- professional development for teachers, support staff and volunteers to integrate cooking activities into the curriculum and out of school programs;
- kitchen starter packs;
- trade discounts for cooking equipment;
- discounts for schools and families to purchase fruit and vegetables;
- assistance with the application process to become part of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program; and
- training for the school community on a traffic light food system to assess the nutritional value of food and drinks.

## Action Area 6: Food from Home

**Food from Home aims to encourage families and children to pack healthy school lunchboxes.**

Healthy food coming from home will support the creation of a healthy food and drink culture in ACT schools.

Schools that implement this action area will focus primarily on building the knowledge, skills and confidence of preschool aged children and their parents around healthy eating. Many of the resources and activities under this action area are also suitable to help influence students' lunches in primary school.

Lunch habits are consciously formed by families in preschool and kindergarten. In later years, these habits are harder for a family to change because children develop set ideas about what they like and expect for lunch.

It is useful for schools to find ways to encourage families early on to provide healthy food. This may be through the introductory pack for starting school. For example, if all students are expected to bring a healthy lunch, this reduces pressure on parents from their child to provide unhealthy foods.

Schools are encouraged to go beyond lunches by promoting healthy food and drinks for classroom parties and events that involve students bringing food from home.



### **Schools<sup>i</sup> that select this action area will have access to the following:**

- professional development for preschool teaching staff on how to teach children about nutrition;
- preschool classroom sessions to help children recognise vegetables and fruit;
- healthy lunchbox events where preschool students prepare food for parents, and parents receive information on healthy lunchboxes;
- discounts for families to purchase fruit and vegetables; and
- training for the school community on a traffic light food system to assess the nutritional value of food and drinks.

i. Only those schools signed up to Fresh Tastes will be eligible for the incentives.

**Healthy food coming from home will support the creation of a healthy food and drink culture in ACT schools.**



# Partners



**Fresh Tastes has a network of community, business and government partners to provide coordinated advice, services and/or activities for participating schools.**

## ACT Government partners



### ACT Health

Population Health Division

Division of Women, Youth and Children

### ACT Education and Training Directorate

Schools Capital Works

Office for Schools

Learning and Teaching

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

ACT Government Schools

### Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate

Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative – ACT

### Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Healthier Work, WorkSafe ACT

### School partnerships with public, Catholic and independent schools

## Community and business partners



Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE



ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations

the power of humanity



Physical Activity Foundation



# The big picture

## International context

Governments around the world are committed to supporting activities that enable individuals to eat well and be active for good health. The Australian Government is supportive of the World Health Organization's *Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*. This Strategy supports programs in the school setting that promote healthy diets and behaviours.<sup>23</sup>



## National context

### National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health (NPAPH)

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) announced the NPAPH in 2008 for funding from 2011-2018. The NPAPH aims to reduce lifestyle related chronic diseases by laying the foundations for healthy behaviours in the daily lives of Australians. The ACT Government signed an agreement in 2008 to provide funding to deliver the NPAPH ACT Healthy Children's Initiative. The ACT Government is committed to reaching the NPAPH targets that relate to children:

- increasing daily serves of fruit and vegetables;
- increasing physical activity levels; and
- decreasing unhealthy weight.

Fresh Tastes is one program under the NPAPH ACT Healthy Children's Initiative. More details about the ACT Healthy Children's Initiative are provided on page 34.



## **Australian Dietary Guidelines**

The *Australian Dietary Guidelines*, updated in 2013, are based on scientific evidence and research. They provide up to date advice about the amount and kinds of foods that people need to eat for health and wellbeing and outline specific information relevant to children.

## **National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines (NHSCG)**

The NHSCG provide guidance, resources and training to help canteen managers make healthier food and drink choices for school canteen menus. The NHSCG are based on the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.

ACT schools are supported to follow the NHSCG through the *Canteen Fresh ACT* program, which is linked to the Food for Sale action area of Fresh Tastes.

## **Australian Curriculum**

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority is responsible for developing and implementing a national curriculum from kindergarten through to year 12. The aim is to improve educational outcomes for all young Australians.

A number of learning areas and subjects have already been implemented; others are in various stages of development. Fresh Tastes will link with learning areas under the Australian Curriculum in particular the Health and Physical Education, and Technologies domains. Lesson plans and resources promoted through Fresh Tastes will be mapped to the Australian Curriculum.

**Children need the right type of food so they can grow, develop, learn and play to their full potential.**



# ACT context



## The following initiatives and programs contribute to achieving the ACT Government's goal of zero growth in obesity, and the vision of a healthy food and drink culture in ACT schools.

Fresh Tastes has established links with each of these initiatives and programs to strengthen its impact on the health and wellbeing of children and their families.



### NPAPH ACT Healthy Children's Initiative

ACT Health has a range of programs under the NPAPH ACT Healthy Children's Initiative to embed a culture of healthy lifestyles in a range of early childhood; school; sport and active recreation; and family focused environments. Programs under this initiative include Fresh Tastes, Kids at Play, Ride or Walk to School, Healthy Food at Sport and It's Your Move ACT.

### Towards Zero Growth Healthy Weight Action Plan

The Healthy Weight Initiative is a set of proposals developed by an ACT Government led taskforce charged with finding measures to build on the many programs and policies already in place to tackle obesity across the ACT. This recognises the importance of areas outside the health sector such as education, transport planning and workplaces in influencing the community's capacity to make healthy lifestyle choices.

The Healthy Weight Initiative builds on Commonwealth initiatives funded through the NPAPH, the work of clinicians and non-government bodies, and many programs currently operating through the ACT Government to promote good health.

A number of strategies within the *Towards Zero Growth Healthy Weight Action Plan* will support the development of a healthy food and drink culture in ACT schools.

## **Water Refill Station Project**

The ACT Government is committed to phasing out sugary drinks in ACT primary schools and promoting tap water as the drink of choice. The ACT Education and Training Directorate will install water refill stations and supply reusable drink bottles to ACT public schools that end the sale of sugary drinks and bottled water through their involvement in the Fresh Tastes program.

## **Healthy Canberra Grants and the Health Promotion Innovation Fund**

The ACT Government administers a \$2 million annual grants program that supports activities that promote good health and the prevention of chronic disease, with a particular focus on healthy weight of children. Funding is provided to strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities to make healthy choices. School communities are eligible to apply. Consideration will be given to applications that align with, extend and/or complement programs under the ACT Healthy Children's Initiative, including Fresh Tastes.

## **School Canteen Support Project**

The ACT Government provides funding to the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations to deliver activities that support the sustainability of ACT public school canteens, improve business practices and improve healthy eating options in the school community. These activities complement and link with *Canteen Fresh ACT* services as part of the Fresh Tastes Food for Sale action area.

## **Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative ACT (AuSSI ACT)**

AuSSI ACT provides support and advice to schools about how to make the most out of a vegetable garden, manage their organic waste and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These activities complement and link with the Fresh Tastes Growing Food action area. AuSSI ACT is coordinated by the ACT Government's Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate.

## **Healthier Work**

Healthier Work provides support to employers to develop health and wellbeing initiatives in their workplace. Schools participating in Fresh Tastes can access this support to develop a tailored workplace health and wellbeing program so that school staff are role modelling healthy behaviours to students. Healthier Work is coordinated by WorkSafe ACT under the ACT Government's Justice and Community Safety Directorate. It is funded by the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health under the ACT Healthy Worker's Initiative.

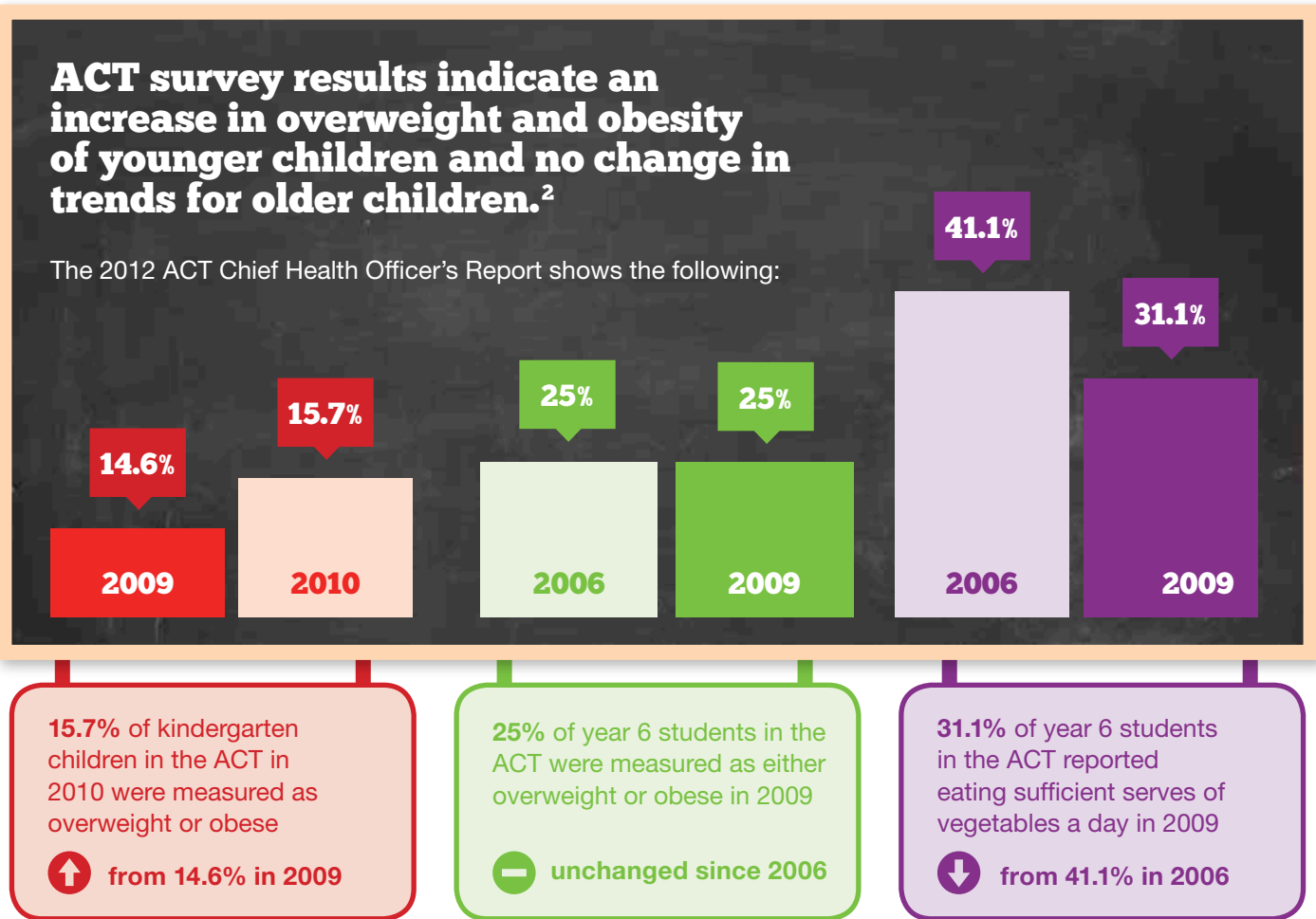
## **Active Kids Challenge and Fruit and Vege Pledge**

The Active Kids Challenge is offered to all ACT primary schools during Term 3. It promotes healthy lifestyle messages to students through classroom activities and resources, including a two week themed period aligned to making healthy food choices. The Fruit and Vege Pledge involves schools and students making a commitment to healthy eating. The Active Kids Challenge and Fruit and Vege Pledge are coordinated by the Physical Activity Foundation.

# Where we are now

## ACT survey results indicate an increase in overweight and obesity of younger children and no change in trends for older children.<sup>2</sup>

The 2012 ACT Chief Health Officer's Report shows the following:



15.7% of kindergarten children in the ACT in 2010 were measured as overweight or obese

↑ from 14.6% in 2009

25% of year 6 students in the ACT were measured as either overweight or obese in 2009

— unchanged since 2006

31.1% of year 6 students in the ACT reported eating sufficient serves of vegetables a day in 2009

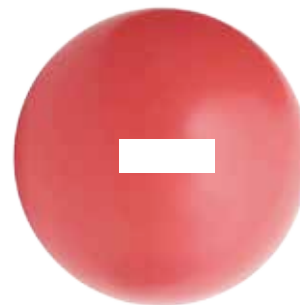
↓ from 41.1% in 2006

These results show that we need to focus on embedding healthy habits in younger children to reduce the number of children becoming overweight or obese.

# Where we want to be



## The performance benchmarks in the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health which Fresh Tastes contributes to are:



### **Increase in proportion of children at unhealthy weight held at less than five per cent**

from baseline by 2016; proportion of children at healthy weight returned to baseline level by 2018.

### **Increase in mean number of daily serves of fruits and vegetables**

consumed by children by at least 0.2 for fruits and 0.5 for vegetables from baseline by 2016; 0.6 for fruits and 1.5 for vegetables by 2018.

In other words, we recognise that children's weight has been increasing in recent years. Our aim is to stop children gaining weight and to gradually increase the amount of vegetables and fruit children eat every day.

# References

1. Department of Health and Ageing: 2007 National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey – Main findings. Australian Government, 2008.
2. ACT Health: Australian Capital Territory Chief Health Officer's Report 2012. ACT Government, 2012.
3. Victorian Government and The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne: Obesity in Children – causes. [http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Obesity\\_in\\_children](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Obesity_in_children). Accessed August 2013.
4. ACT Health: *Health Status of Children in the ACT*, ACT Government, Canberra, ACT, 2013.
5. Royal Children's Hospital and Murdoch Children Research Institute: Tap Into Water Background Information Paper. Victorian Government, 2007.
6. NSW Centre for Public Health Nutrition: Soft Drink, Weight Status and Health: A Review. NSW Department of Health, 2009.
7. Waters E, de Silva-Sangigorski A, Burford BJ et al: Interventions for preventing obesity in children (Review). *The Cochrane Collaboration*, 2013.
8. Irwin LG, Siddiqi A, Hertzman, C: Early Childhood Development – A Powerful Equalizer: Final Report for the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health. University of British Columbia, 2007.
9. Pearson N, Biddle SJ, Gorely T: Family correlates of fruit and vegetable consumption in children and adolescents: a systematic review. *Public Health Nutrition*, 12 (2): 267 – 283.
10. Knai C, Pomerleau J, Lock K et al: Getting children to eat more fruit and vegetables: a systemic review. *Preventive Medicine* 42, 85-95. 2005.
11. Howerton M, Bell S, Dodd, K et al: School based nutrition programs. *Journal of Nutrition Education Behaviour* 39, 186-196. 2007.
12. Story M, Kaphingst K, French S: The Role of Schools in Obesity Prevention. *The Future of Children*. 16 (1), 109-142. 2006.
13. ACT Health: Evaluation Report Healthy Food@School, Phase One March 2011 – June 2012. Unpublished, 2013.
14. Soraindo A, Feinstein L: What is the relationship between child nutrition and school outcomes?. 2006.
15. Food and Nutrition Information Centre: Role of Nutrition in Learning and Behaviour. 2011.
16. Nansel T, Huang T, Rovner A et al: Association of school performance indicators with implementation of the Healthy Kids, Smart Kids program: case study. *Public Health Nutrition*, 2010.
17. The Smith Family: How Learning is enhanced through improved health and nutrition. Sydney, 2011.
18. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence: Behaviour change at population, community and individual levels. *NICE public health guidance* 6, National Health Service, 2007.
19. ACT Government: Parliamentary Agreement for the 8th Legislative Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory. [http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/383476/parliamentaryagreement.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/383476/parliamentaryagreement.pdf). Accessed September 2013.

- 
20. TNS Social Research: Healthy Lifestyle Qualitative Research with Adults and Parents. Western Australia Department of Health, unpublished, 2011.
  21. Deakin University and The University of Melbourne: Key Findings of the Final Report to: Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation. 2009.
  22. ACT Health: Consultation Snapshot: Healthy Food@School – Phase 2, May 2012. Unpublished, 2012.
  23. World Health Organization: Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Switzerland, 2004.

### **Accessibility**

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues as accessible as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format such as large print, please phone 13 22 81 or email [HealthACT@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthACT@act.gov.au)

If English is not your first language and you require the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please phone 13 14 50.

If you are Deaf, or have a speech or hearing impairment and need the teletypewriter service, please phone 13 36 77 and ask for 13 22 81.

For speak and listen users, please phone 1300 555 727 and ask for 13 22 81. For more information on these services visit <http://www.relayservice.com.au>

# Get involved and find out more...



[freshtastes@act.gov.au](mailto:freshtastes@act.gov.au)



[www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)



(02) 6205 1452

© Australian Capital Territory, Canberra, February 2014

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the Territory Records Office, Community and Infrastructure Services, Territory and Municipal Services, ACT Government, GPO Box 158, Canberra City ACT 2601.

Enquiries about this publication should be directed to ACT Health Communications and Marketing Unit, GPO Box 825 Canberra City ACT 2601 or email: [HealthACT@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthACT@act.gov.au)

[www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au) | [www.act.gov.au](http://www.act.gov.au)  
Enquiries: Canberra 13ACT1 or 132281



**ACT**  
Government

**fresh**  
**TASTES**

Fresh Tastes is coordinated by the Health Improvement Branch, ACT Health.