



A Collaboration between Deakin University, Rural Northwest Health (RNH), Yarriambiack Shire Council (YSC) and West Wimmera Health Service (WWHS)

YCHANGE was established in July 2015 in response to a request from Rural Northwest Health (RNH) for advice on how to reduce avoidable hospital admissions. The Yarriambiack Shire Council (YSC) experiences one of the highest prevalence of overweight and obesity AND the highest per capita sugar sweetened beverage consumption of any Shire in the State of Victoria (VPHS 2016).

**We aim to do this by 'making the healthy choice, the easy choice.'**

Since July 2015, staff from Deakin Uni have held monthly workshops and meetings with representatives from RNH, YSC, other health services and community members. The focus of these workshops has been using Systems Thinking through Group Model Building and the Collective Impact Framework to identify and understand what is different about YSC that has led to these bigger than usual problems with unhealthy weight and identify ways to improve things. Deakin University is a world leader in using 'systems thinking' in health promotion – this means we take a big picture view of the problem, and look for big picture solutions. We try to reach larger groups of people with broad strategies, eg in schools and workplaces. It is also much easier to prevent a

person from becoming overweight than it is to lose weight, this is why working in early years, with children and families is essential. So far several action areas have been prioritised and community working groups have been formed. Jill Whelan and Dr Penny Love from Deakin University are working with community members, RNH, YSC and staff from West Wimmera Health Service to use an evidence informed approach to this work (with assistance from Professor Colin Bell, Dr Lynne Millar and Professor Steven Allender also from Deakin University). Everything we do involves community consultation and participatory processes. A strong evaluation framework is in place.

**The prioritised action areas to date and continuing are:**

1. Food and play policy and food brought from home in **Kindergartens** to meet healthy eating guidelines in the Nutrition and Active Play policy of YSC.
2. All **schools** across the Shire to meet or exceed the traffic light system of food provided in school canteens and through lunch orders as per the Healthy Eating Advisory Service (HEAS) Guidelines. Aiming for School policies/guidelines re food as rewards & healthy fundraisers, treats limited to 2 per term.
3. The two largest **employers** within the Shire to remove or reduce sugar sweetened beverages available for sale and to create and adopt Healthy Catering Guidelines as per the HEAS Guidelines.
4. **The YarriYak** café (located within RNH grounds) menu that prioritises healthy options with food and beverages available for sale meeting the goal of 65% green and only 15% red.
5. **Food retail outlets** – both dine in and takeaways across the shire will be encouraged to cook with healthier oils to reduce saturated fat consumption, offer reduced portion sizes and include more healthy options on their menus (using the Heart Foundation Guidelines).
6. Sports Clubs across the shire promote **water** as the drink of choice throughout 2016 & 2017 (in partnership with the Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly project) & address menu changes in 2017.
7. Develop and implement a **communications** strategy through social and mainstream media to keep community members informed of and engaged with the proposed changes.
8. **Move More** Strategies – three across the Shire (one for each Ward) – including walking groups & Active April

### **Funding \$s Big Thank You's:**

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