



HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *Campaspe Shire*

COOKING FOR CHANGE TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

Cooking for Change! Train-the-Trainer was developed in partnership with HLC and Bendigo Foodshare. This model is a capacity-building program delivered by Bendigo Foodshare that equips community organisations and schools with the skills, knowledge, and resources to independently deliver food literacy and healthy cooking education, creating sustainable improvements in healthy eating and food skills across the Loddon Campaspe region. This model was piloted in Campaspe Shire in 2025-2026 with Echuca Regional Health's Health Promotion staff.

Train the Trainer

HLC partnered with Bendigo Foodshare to expand the successful Cooking for Change! program into Campaspe Shire. Echuca Regional Health (ERH) was chosen to pilot this program, given their extensive experience working with local schools, particularly as part of the HLC-funded Healthy Schools Program.

Bendigo Foodshare developed a Cooking for Change! Train the Trainer package which included a manual, printable resources and recipe ideas. They then facilitated an in-person workshop to support the upskilling of ERH staff members.



Pilot sessions

HLC provided ERH with a cooking equipment set for use during the Cooking for Change! sessions. Bendigo Foodshare then supported ERH to liaise with Echuca College, schedule in Cooking for Change! sessions, and facilitate and evaluate the sessions. Echuca College was also provided with a stand-up freezer to support them to store food relief meals on site safely. ERH then replicated this, independent of Bendigo Foodshare with Echuca TAFE. These sessions engaged 17 students who made 350 meals for local food relief.

This project served as a pilot project for the expansion of the Cooking for Change! program into other regional areas.





HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26

Campaspe Shire

BREEN AVENUE WALKING TRACK PARKRUN

Breen Avenue Walking Track parkrun was established in Kyabram through a partnership between the Kyabram Development Committee, Campaspe Shire and Healthy Loddon Campaspe (HLC). After identifying an opportunity to bring the internationally recognised community fitness event to the township, the Development Committee led the application process with parkrun Australia, with support from HLC and Campaspe Shire.

Application process and trial runs

Campaspe Shire assisted with course assessment and approvals, while HLC provided funding, project support and guidance through relevant council processes. Following approval from parkrun Australia in early 2026, two trial events were held, attracting 97 and 85 participants respectively. Despite significant flooding just prior to the trials, Campaspe Shire undertook remediation works to ensure the course remained operational.



Launch event

The official launch on 28 March 2026 was project managed by HLC and supported by a targeted local marketing campaign. The launch attracted 110 registered participants, successfully establishing a new free, volunteer-led physical activity opportunity that promotes health, wellbeing and community connection in Kyabram.

New parkrunners

Over the course of the launch and the next three events, Breen Avenue Walking Track parkrun attracted 353 participants, 80 of which had never tried parkrun before.



The Breen Avenue Walking Track parkrun is now a fully sustainable, ongoing event, which runs weekly.



HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *Campaspe Shire*

MULTICULTURAL AND FIRST NATIONS SWIM

Healthy Loddon Campaspe partnered with the Echuca War Memorial Aquatic Centre to deliver swimming programs for multicultural adults and children, along with baby and toddler swimming lessons for First Nations families. The program was developed in response to identified gaps in water safety knowledge, swimming skills and confidence among these population groups, with the aim of increasing participation, safety and confidence in aquatic environments.

Multicultural Swimming Lessons

Echuca 208 Primary School approached EWMAC with concerns about the swimming skills of some of its multicultural students. Many of these students had recently arrived in Australia and had limited opportunities to learn how to swim. Parents also expressed concern, as many were unable to swim themselves and were therefore worried about their children's safety and participation in swimming activities.

Two programs were delivered to support multicultural community members:

- Multicultural Students Program: For multicultural students in Grades 3 to 6.
- Multicultural Adults Program: For parents of participating students and other multicultural adults residing in the region.



First Nations Swimming Lessons

It was identified that swimming lesson enrolment rates were very low for First Nations children, and therefore swimming lessons for First Nations babies and toddlers were established.

In collaboration with Njernda Aboriginal Corporation additional work was undertaken to ensure cultural safety standards were upheld and to address any identified barriers to participation.



Across the three cohorts, Echuca War Memorial Aquatics Centre delivered 35 sessions and has since integrated these lessons into their regular timetable.



HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26

Loddon Shire

ACTIVE LODDON

Healthy Loddon Campaspe (HLC) delivered a range of community-based physical activity programs across the municipality. The project was developed in response to local health and wellbeing data demonstrating an ongoing need to support active lifestyles and reduce barriers to participation in physical activity.

Early Morning Swims

The program operated weekly, providing extended access outside standard opening hours. This pilot was facilitated by Belgravia Leisure, who supported the initiative by opening and staffing the pool earlier than usual to enable participation.



Pickleball Activation

Pickleball sessions were delivered in Newbridge and Mitiamo, with four sessions held at each location. They were designed to upskill community members so they could continue to engage in the activity into the future.



Train the Trainer Program

The Train the Trainer initiative sought expressions of interest (EOI), inviting Loddon Shire residents to undertake training to become qualified to deliver physical activity sessions locally. Next steps include candidates to enrol in their preferred course.

Canoeing/Kayaking on the Loddon

Kayaking sessions were delivered across three locations: Little Lake Boort, Laanecoorie Reservoir and Serpentine Creek. They were delivered by qualified instructors from Canoes Plus, with a focus on building participants' kayaking skills and confidence rather than providing passive experiences.



Tai Chi / Strength Classes

These sessions are still being planned and will be delivered in 2026-2027.



HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26

Central Goldfields Shire

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROJECT

The Central Goldfields Physical Activity Project was delivered between July 2025 and June 2026 across Central Goldfields Shire. The project aimed to increase opportunities for residents to be physically active, reduce barriers to participation and activate existing recreation spaces and Healthy Loddon Campaspe infrastructure.

Walking Basketball

The program provided a free, low-impact and social physical activity opportunity for residents aged 55 years and over, including those returning to physical activity following injury or seeking a gentler form of aerobic exercise.

Pickleball

The free weekly sessions provided a fun, accessible and beginner-friendly activity suitable for people of all ages and abilities. Pickleball offers a low-impact form of exercise that supports cardiovascular fitness, balance, agility and hand-eye coordination while remaining gentle on joints. The activity also provided valuable opportunities for social connection and community participation

Sporting Equipment Libraries

Sporting equipment was purchased to support new locations, increasing free and accessible opportunities for residents to participate in physical activity and make greater use of local recreation spaces.

Walk This Way

Walk This Way built on a successful Healthy Loddon Campaspe initiative previously delivered in neighbouring local government areas including Loddon and Campaspe Shires. The project aimed to support residents to be physically active for free by encouraging greater use of local footpaths, walking routes and public spaces.

Childrens Skills Sessions

These basketball and netball sessions focused on developing fundamental skills in a fun, welcoming and supportive environment. The sessions complemented the expansion of the Sports Equipment Libraries by introducing participants to local recreation facilities and helping them gain the knowledge and confidence needed to continue participating independently.

Lights On

This initiative continued the activation of local recreation spaces by extending lighting at parks and recreation reserves during the early morning and evening.





HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *Central Goldfields Shire*

HEALTHY EATING PROJECT

The Central Goldfields Healthy Eating Project was delivered between July 2025 and June 2026 and focused on building the capacity of local organisations to deliver healthy eating and cooking programs within their communities. Through the Cooking Together Train the Trainer model and development of facilitator resources, the project sought to support sustainable, community-led approaches to healthy eating that could continue beyond the funding period. As the project progressed, stakeholder consultation highlighted a greater need for practical resources and facilitator support, resulting in an increased focus on capacity building.

Cooking Together Manual and Train-the-Trainer

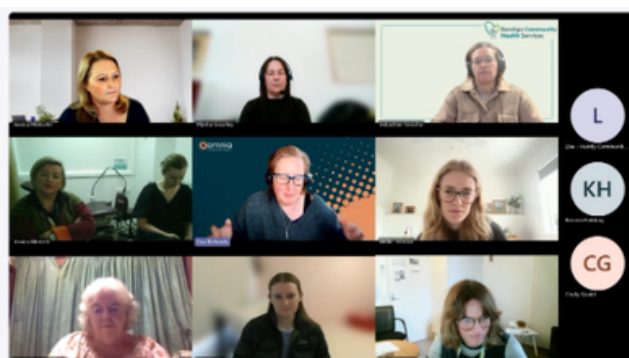
A Cooking Together Manual was developed in partnership with Expert Eats to provide practical resources and guidance for organisations interested in delivering safe, engaging and inclusive community cooking sessions. The manual included facilitator training guidance, planning tools and checklists, nutrition information, session templates and resources, and safety and risk management support. A one-page summary resource was also developed and distributed to schools, kindergartens, community houses and community organisations across CGS to raise awareness and encourage uptake of the resource.

Launch

The Cooking Together Manual was soft launched through the Healthy Community Network (HCN), reaching a broad cross-sector audience from local government, health services, community health, neighbourhood houses, education and community organisations across the Loddon Campaspe region. The HCN session was attended by 27 participants and generated strong interest in the resource, including enquiries from organisations seeking access to the manual following the presentation.

Online training

To further support local capacity building, Expert Eats delivered an online Cooking Together: Train the Trainer Workshop on 19 June 2026. Eight participants registered to attend the session, which also served as the official launch of the Cooking Together Manual.





HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *Macedon Ranges Shire*

GROWING IN THE RANGES

Healthy Loddon Campaspe (HLC) delivered the Growing in the Ranges Project, an initiative which aimed to enable children and their families to grow their own produce. This project also provided small scale infrastructure to local kindergartens to further support children's learning and exposure to different foods.

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKG) Memberships and Small-Scale Infrastructure

Five kindergartens were chosen to be involved in this project:

- Manna Gum Children and Family Centre
- Lancefield Children's Centre
- Riddells Creek Kindergarten
- Little Stones Romsey
- Goodstart Early Learning Kyneton

These centres were provided with SAKG memberships and small-scale infrastructure such as wicking beds, watering systems and gardening equipment. With the support of Flourish funding, centre staff were also provided with learning opportunities through a personal development workshop to assist them in utilising their SAKG memberships.

Growing Workshops

Growing workshops were held with the five participating kindergartens for families of attending children. The initiative was designed to provide families with practical knowledge and hands-on experience in growing and caring for their own produce.

Families received a presentation, where children learned that sometimes home-grown produce can look different to produce from the supermarket. Families also took part in a hands-on learning experience where participants could choose from numerous vegetables and herbs, and were guided through how to plant them. Families could then take these plants home.

Over the five sessions, 18 families participated.





HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *Macedon Ranges Shire*

HEALTHY SPORTS VENUES

Healthy Loddon Campaspe (HLC) delivered the Healthy Sports Venues project, in which local sports venues were supported to implement healthy changes to their food offerings. Additionally, a Healthy Choices Framework was developed to continue to prioritise healthy eating at sporting venues across Macedon Ranges Shire.

2022-2023 Iteration

This project was first run in 2022/2023, and initial discussions exploring what was already being delivered and gaps that could be addressed through this project found that many changes from the previous HLC Healthy Choices in Council-Run Facilities 2022/2023 project had been maintained. This included regular auditing through the Healthy Choices FoodChecker, stocking red foods in the smallest commercial size, and where possible, maintaining the recommended splits of red, amber and green foods.

Enhancing this work

To enhance the work completed in 2022-2023, this iteration supported further learning and promotion by providing the centres with additional signage, shelf runners and flyers. This was to not only further promote healthy items to customers, but to also support staff in restocking appropriately. Centres also implemented a fruit and water deal, and increased the prices of red foods to further incentivise healthy options.

Next steps

A Healthy Choices Framework has been drafted with the goal of informing a healthy eating policy for sport and recreation centres in the future.





HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *Macedon Ranges Shire*

VERY VEGGIE APRIL

Between March and May, a multi-component community campaign was delivered across the Macedon Ranges (and Mount Alexander) to increase awareness, skills, and positive attitudes toward cooking and eating more vegetables. The initiative centred on the Edgy Veg Awards and combined several coordinated activities designed to engage the community in practical and experiential ways.

Edgy Veg Awards

The Edgy Veg Awards engaged 29 (19 in Macedon Ranges and 10 in Mount Alexander) local hospitality businesses to create new, appealing vegetable dishes, encouraging both locals and visitors to try and score.

Gift cards were provided to support participation for vulnerable groups.



Playgroup Workshops

Two supported playgroup sessions ran to engage families in informal discussion around how to increase vegetable intake, while providing fun hands-on activities such as sushi making.

Due to underspend in other projects, another four workshops were planned.

Cooking Classes

One targeted cooking class was delivered for priority populations, providing participants with practical cooking skills, nutrition education and opportunities to build confidence and capacity to prepare meals at home.

Farmers Markets

Stalls were set up at farmers markets. These activations provided free tastings of budget friendly, healthy meals and prompted community members to vote on their favourite dish and likelihood of making it at home. Links to recipes as well as DL recipe cards were also provided.

An additional two workshops are planned later in the year.





HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *City of Greater Bendigo*

BENDIGO & DISTRICT ABORIGINAL CO- OPERATIVE HEALTHY MEALS

Healthy Loddon Campaspe (HLC) partnered with Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC) to support healthy eating and food security for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community members in Greater Bendigo. The project strengthened an existing Community-led meal kit initiative, providing culturally safe and practical support that combined access to nutritious food with opportunities to build food knowledge, cooking confidence and connections to local support services. The program is part of the food pantry run by BDAC's wukangu manya team. wukangu manya means we give/offer a hand in Dja Dja Wurrung language.

Developing Partnerships

BDAC led engagement with Community, cultural guidance and on-the-ground delivery through the wukangu manya team. Healthy Loddon Campaspe provided health promotion expertise, resource development, evaluation support and program refinement.

Meal Ingredients

The program provides Community with healthy, ready-to-cook meal kits, distributed daily at BDAC. Each kit includes pre-portioned ingredients and easy-to-follow recipe cards designed to build practical cooking skills. The meal kits help bridge the gap between food relief and cooking confidence, supporting participants to prepare healthy meals independently over time.

Community Consultation

Through the 'Our Future, Our Way' project, BDAC consulted with staff and Community to explore the most appropriate way to support healthy eating and food security. This feedback shaped the project direction, identifying the existing meal kit initiative as the most appropriate approach and ensuring the program reflected Community priorities, built on existing strengths, and responded to local needs.

Yarning as Evaluation

Project learning and evaluation were informed through yarning and discussions with the wukangu manya team. This approach supported culturally appropriate feedback, reflection and shared learning throughout the project.

For more information on 'Our Future, Our Way', visit: www.bdac.com.au/our-future-our-way



The Healthy Loddon Campaspe Initiative is supported by the Victorian State Government



HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *Mount Alexander Shire*

ACTIVE MOUNT ALEXANDER

Healthy Loddon Campaspe worked with local partners to expand a broad range of physical activity opportunities across Mount Alexander.

Physical Activity Sessions

The project delivered a series of exercise programs for participants aged 50 and over during Terms 1 and 2 of 2026. Sessions were held weekly throughout each school term (8–10 sessions per term) and offered a diverse mix of activities to cater to a range of interests, abilities, and fitness levels.

Activities introduced included:

- Tai Chi Classes
- 50+ Weights
- Ballroom dancing
- Chair yoga – on two days
- Boxing 50 +
- Low Impact Exercise
- Belly Dancing



Community Wellbeing Bus

The Community Wellbeing Bus, 'Peggy', has been operating since 2020 and supports community members to access local health, wellbeing, and exercise facilities safely, comfortably, and in a fully accessible way. As part of this project, additional volunteer drivers were recruited and promotion of the service was enhanced by providing free transport and complimentary passes to Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre.





HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *Mount Alexander Shire*

HEALTHY EATING PROJECTS

Healthy Loddon Campaspe worked with local partners to expand a broad range of healthy eating opportunities across Mount Alexander.

Growing in Mount Alexander

This project supported learning about healthy eating and growing vegetables in early years settings across Mount Alexander Shire. Local facilitators were engaged to support growing workshops and the provision of garden beds, plants and equipment facilitated hands-on learning.

Multicultural Healthy Eating Project

Feast of Cultures was integrated into the Castlemaine Community Lunch, which serves over 100 people weekly. Multicultural community members led “lunch takeovers,” designing menus, teaching recipes to volunteers, and sharing cultural insights.

Cooking for Change

Bendigo Foodshare delivered Cooking for Change with Castlemaine Secondary College’s VCE VM and Food Technology students to support them in learning healthy recipes by cooking food for local food relief efforts.

Edgy Veg Awards

The Edgy Veg Awards engaged 29 local hospitality businesses to create new, appealing vegetable dishes, encouraging both locals and visitors to try and score. Gift cards were provided to support participation for vulnerable groups.





HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *Regional*

SUPPORT OUR OWN. CHOOSE LOCALLY GROWN.

Campaign Expansion

In previous iterations of this campaign, the focus was solely on promoting locally grown fruits and vegetables. For this refresh, we expanded to locally grown fruits, vegetables, dairy, grains, and meats and alternatives. This was so we could highlight the large breadth of amazing products we grow in Loddon Campaspe.

Promotional Campaign

We ran a huge online promotional campaign, with over 230 ads running on social media to promote local businesses, shopping locally and eating more whole foods.

With this campaign, we reached **808,600** people across the region!

Materials for Businesses

Alongside our promotional campaign, we also developed promotional packs for businesses. These packs included posters, floor decals, flyers and shelf wobblers to help businesses to promote their locally grown produce. These packs were sent out to approximately 80 businesses.

How to find local businesses

The HLC website was updated with our new 'Support Our Own. Choose Locally Grown' map, where you can see what businesses in your area sell locally grown and produced food, as well as additional resources and recipes.



For more information, visit: healthyloddoncampaspe.au/chooselocallygrown



The Healthy Loddon Campaspe initiative is supported by the Victorian State Government



HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *Regional*

REGIONAL COOKING MODEL

Bendigo Foodshare was engaged to support the review of all of the cooking programs HLC has run before. This was to ensure that when we run cooking sessions in the future, we're learning from what worked and what didn't in previous iterations.

What did Bendigo Foodshare do?

Regional evidence and needs assessment

A comprehensive review of existing cooking programs and evaluations across the region, combined with stakeholder insights, to identify what works well, common challenges, and key enablers of effective programs.

Stakeholder engagement and insights

18 in-depth interviews with organisations (e.g. schools, community houses, health and multicultural services) to capture practical, on-the-ground experience of delivering cooking programs.

Review of existing resources (especially the Cooking Together Manual)

Structured feedback on usability, accessibility, and relevance of current resources, generating clear recommendations for improvement and positioning within a broader model.

Recommendations for a Regional Cooking Model

Evidence-based guidance on how to align and integrate existing manuals, tools, and resources into a coordinated, flexible framework rather than creating new programs from scratch.

Next Steps

Now that we have this information, we're embedding learnings into future projects. We're also working on our website to make it more user-friendly and easy for people to find the resources they need to effectively run a cooking workshop for their community.

For more information, visit: healthyloddoncampaspe.au/healthy-cooking-hub



The Healthy Loddon Campaspe Initiative is supported by the Victorian State Government



HEALTHY LODDON CAMPASPE ACTIVATION PROJECT WRAP UP 2025/26 *Regional*

FLOURISH ACTIVATION PROJECTS

As part of HLC's Flourish Framework, several projects were delivered across the region to support food systems work.



Campaspe Shire **Cooking for People with Disabilities**

Healthy cooking sessions were facilitated for disability services



Central Goldfields **Dig In! Gardening Workshops**

This workshop supported participants to learn about growing their own vegetables at home.



City of Greater Bendigo **Cooking for Change**

Worked with Bendigo Foodshare to deliver Cooking for Change at Huntly Primary School



City of Greater Bendigo **Fresh Fruit Fridays**

Supported the McKern Foundation's Fresh Fruit Fridays expansion into Heathcote



City of Greater Bendigo **Tandoor Ovens**

Supported Old Church on the Hill to purchase Tandoor Ovens to increase access to cultural cooking practices.



Loddon Shire **Farm Tours**

Facilitated two farm tours to support local farmers in learning about regenerative farming practices.



Macedon Ranges **Kitchen Garden workshops**

Worked with Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation to upskill early years educators in kitchen garden education.



Mount Alexander **Harcourt Food Pantry**

Supported Harcourt Community House to establish a food pantry to support local food relief efforts.



The Healthy Loddon Campaspe initiative is supported by the Victorian State Government

FLOURISH ACTIVATION PROJECTS 25/26

As part of HLC's Flourish Framework, several projects were delivered across the region to support food systems work.



Campaspe Shire

Cooking for People with Disabilities

Healthy cooking sessions were facilitated for disability services



Central Goldfields

Dig In! Gardening Workshops

This workshop supported participants to learn about growing their own vegetables at home.



City of Greater Bendigo

Cooking for Change

Worked with Bendigo Foodshare to deliver Cooking for Change at Huntly Primary School



City of Greater Bendigo

Fresh Fruit Fridays

Supported the McKern Foundation's Fresh Fruit Fridays expansion into Heathcote



City of Greater Bendigo

Tandoor Ovens

Supported Old Church on the Hill to purchase Tandoor Ovens to increase access to cultural cooking practices.



Loddon Shire

Farm Tours

Facilitated two farm tours to support local farmers in learning about regenerative farming practices.



Macedon Ranges

Kitchen Garden workshops

Worked with Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation to upskill early years educators in kitchen garden education.



Mount Alexander

Harcourt Food Pantry

Supported Harcourt Community House to establish a food pantry to support local food relief efforts.