



MEDIA RELEASE

Healthy Together Mildura Continues Despite Defunding Of State Level Pilot

19/10/16

Despite the Healthy Together Victoria initiative failing to be refunded in the most recent state budget the local level initiative, Healthy Together Mildura, continues albeit with reduced resources.

Healthy Together Mildura Manager, Jane McCracken said, “Mr Crisp was quite correct in his recent comments to the Sunraysia Daily that Healthy Together Mildura did not receive any funding in the most recent state budget. However, four years ago when the Healthy Together initiative began Sunraysia Community Health Services committed our existing preventive health funding to the Healthy Together funding Mildura Rural City Council received to strengthen the local effort. This not only resulted in a larger workforce during the pilot period of Healthy Together Victoria, but has meant that since the funding was withdrawn we have been able to continue to work with local early years services, schools, workplaces and the community more broadly to promote active living and healthy eating to combat rising levels of obesity.”

During the pilot period, which began in 2012, Healthy Together Mildura operated as a partnership between Mildura Rural City Council and Sunraysia Community Health Services with staff situated in both organizations. Twelve communities were selected from across the state to pilot the new approach to prevention with the aim of initiating action on the systems that influence the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. The Commonwealth government part funded the initiative through the National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health and the state government also provided funds, with local governments leading local efforts. The initiative took a complex whole of systems approach to prevention, delivering multiple strategies, policies and initiatives at both the state and local levels to target Victorians in the places where they spend their time.

Healthy Together Mildura has had a number of successes, including the initiation of a Regional School Breakfast Partnership which serves over 1000 healthy breakfasts per week to local school children, the annual 10,000 steps challenge which saw over 700 locals sign-up to improve their levels of physical activity in 2016, the introduction of a healthy eating and physical activity education program for parents of young children and the establishment of a community food share for seconds and excess produce in partnership with Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council.

“While we don’t have the same level of resources or staff as when the Healthy Together Victoria initiative was operating, Sunraysia Community Health Services are committed to supporting prevention efforts in the local community through Healthy Together Mildura within our existing staffing. Even though there are no longer any Healthy Together staff located at Council, we continue



to maintain a very strong working relationship,” said Sunraysia Community Health Services CEO Simone Heald.

“Prevention initiatives require long-term vision and are most likely to succeed when all three tiers of government work together towards an agreed common agenda. Local communities are best placed to develop and deliver local solutions to the obesity epidemic, however, these efforts are strengthened and their effects magnified through state and federal legislation and support,” said Healthy Together Mildura Manager, Jane McCracken.

Further information about Healthy Together Mildura can be found at www.healthytogethertomildura.com.au

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