

# SMPCP

## HEALTHY CHOICES

## NUDGE TRIALS

DHHS Health Promotion  
Innovation Grants Program

*Driving intersectoral  
action to improve  
healthier eating*



# IN THIS REPORT

- 2 The project journey - highlights
- 3 About the project
  - Key project objectives
- 4 About the nudge trials
  - Food & drink nudges
  - The nudge trial process
  - Nudge types
  - Nudge durations
- 6 Reach
  - Other connections
- 7 How did the overall food and drink menus rate?
- 8 Drinks results
  - Change in drink availability
  - Change in number of drinks sold
  - Other drinks measures
- 10 Food results
- 11 Visitor/staff surveying
- 12 Manager surveying
- 13 Challenges, learnings & other reflections
  - Challenges
  - Learnings
  - Other reflections
- 16 Resources developed
- 17 Partnership growth & capacity building
- 18 Conclusion
  - For further information

## THE PROJECT JOURNEY - HIGHLIGHTS





## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project was delivered between September 2018 and August 2019 by the Southern Melbourne Primary Care Partnership Healthy Eating Working Group (SMPCP HEWG) and supported by a \$50,000 Department of Health and Human Services grant.

The HEWG comprises representatives from:

- Alfred Health
- Baker Heart & Diabetes Institute
- Bayside City Council
- Cabrini Health
- Caulfield Community Health Service
- City of Stonnington
- Central Bayside Community Health Services
- Connect Health & Community
- Glen Eira City Council
- Kingston City Council
- Star Health
- SMPCP Team

Grant monies funded a part-time Project Officer position and HEWG training. The project also featured a strong collaborative approach and significant in-kind support from member organisations.

It aligned with Victorian Government health priorities and the preventative health plans of HEWG members.

## KEY PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To pilot the impact of reducing availability of/access to unhealthy food & beverages in sport and recreation settings
2. Partnership growth and capacity building

## ABOUT THE NUDGE TRIALS

A 'nudge' is a small change that can be made in a setting that influences people's behaviour (VicHealth, 2018). Evidence shows that changes in the way food and drinks are displayed, priced and promoted can nudge people to choose healthier options.

**“Making the healthy choice, the easy choice”**

The project employed the Victorian Government Healthy Choices Guidelines, specifically the traffic light system which classifies foods and drinks as:

**GREEN (best choices)**

**AMBER (choose carefully)**

**RED (limit)**



The guidelines aim for menus with:

- no more than 20% RED items
- at least 50% GREEN items

Healthy Eating Advisory Service (HEAS) tools, resources and advice were used throughout the project.



## FOOD & DRINK NUDGES

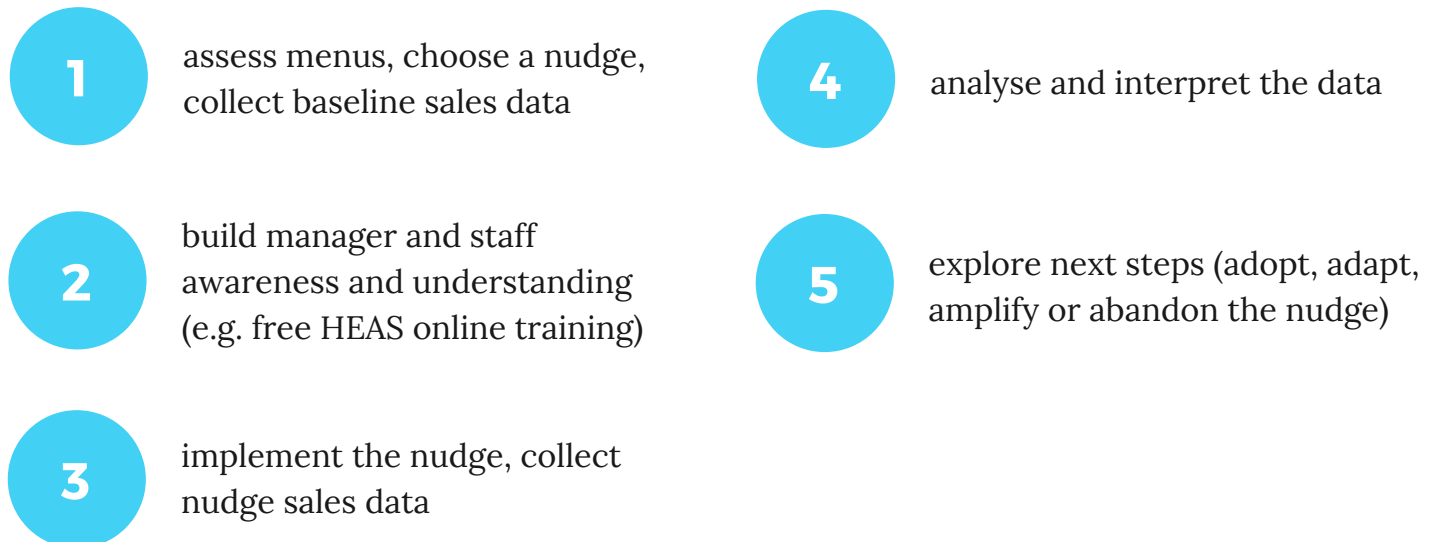
The initial project plan was to focus on sugar sweetened beverages (drinks nudges), however this was expanded to include food to allow sites to choose the nudge that best suited them.

The project aim was expressed to prospective sites as:

“to increase the availability and sales of healthier food and drink options without affecting profit.”

# THE NUDGE TRIAL PROCESS

- Recruit sites
- Work with sites to:



## NUDGE TYPES

### Drinks nudges:

- no more than 20% RED drinks and drinks placed on lower shelves in the fridge
- at least 50% GREEN drinks and drinks placed at eye level in the fridge

### Food nudges:

- Introduce bananas (GREEN) and remove sweet muffins (RED) at one site
  - Introduce Raisin Toast with Nuttelex/with coffee deal (AMBER) and remove sweet muffins (RED) at one site
- N.B. During the nudges additional red sweet snacks were off sale at the respective sites. This change was incorporated in the sales data analysis.

## NUDGE DURATIONS

- Pre-nudge or baseline periods for all trials were 2 weeks
- Drinks nudges were 2 to 4 weeks long
- Food nudges were 2 to 4 weeks long



## REACH

TRIAL SITES  
RECRUITED

5

LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
AREAS

3

Nudges were effectively implemented in four of the five sites, over two phases, enabling full analysis of **four drinks fridge nudges and two food nudges**.

SITES WITH  
COMPLETED NUDGE  
IMPLEMENTATION

4

NUDGES  
ASSESSED

6

The unsuccessful implementation at one site during Phase 1 offered learnings that contributed substantially to Phase 2 implementation.

The attendance figures and outlet usage data, taken together, show the potential reach of healthier canteens and kiosks.

COMBINED WEEKLY  
ATTENDANCE AT 2  
LEISURE CENTRE SITES

12,000+

COMBINED WEEKLY  
MATCHES AT  
2 SOCCER CLUBS\*

80

KIOSK/CANTEEN  
USAGE RATE<sup>^</sup>

71%

\* involving players, spectators and officials

<sup>^</sup> Combined customer/staff surveying - % that reported purchasing food or drinks from the outlet "every time", "most of the time" or "sometimes" when they attend the venue

Carnegie Swim Centre kiosk	Facility managed by GE Leisure (Glen Eira Leisure) under Glen Eira City Council	
"The Daily Kitchen" at Glen Eira Sports & Aquatic Centre	Facility managed by GE Leisure (Glen Eira Leisure) under Glen Eira City Council	Kiosk privately operated by The Artistic Group
Glen Eira FC canteen	Facility owned and managed by Glen Eira City Council	Canteen privately operated by The Food Parlour by arrangement with the club
Brighton Soccer Club canteen	Facility owned by Bayside City Council	Canteen privately operated by The Food Parlour by arrangement with the club
"Harry's Kiosk" at Harold Holt Swim Centre	Facility owned and operated by City of Stonnington	Kiosk privately operated under lease by Greenz Pty Ltd

## OTHER CONNECTIONS

OTHER  
SITES  
APPROACHED

8

STUDENT  
PLACEMENTS

4

COUNCIL  
GRANTS  
SUBMITTED

4

A further eight sporting organisations and recreation centres were approached during the recruitment phase, which developed contacts and relationships which may assist with future work.

In particular, there were enhanced linkages between South Metro Junior Football League (SMJFL) and HEWG members, particularly local government – with four submissions for council grants made by SMJFL to support Healthy Canteen activities.

Four tertiary students contributed to the project during two placement periods.

## HOW DID THE OVERALL FOOD AND DRINK MENUS RATE?

Healthy Choices Guidelines	Carnegie Swim Centre	Glen Eira FC	Brighton Soccer Club	Harry's Kiosk at HHSC	Average
50%	14%	23%	22%	11%	18%
30%	10%	20%	13%	19%	16%
20%	76%	57%	65%	69%	67%

Initial menu assessments (all food and drinks) highlighted the need for action in these settings, with the average assessment of 67% RED and 18% GREEN products being markedly distant from the Healthy Choices Guideline of no more than 20% RED and at least 50% GREEN products.



# DRINKS RESULTS

Based on results from the  
4 completed drinks nudges

## CHANGE IN DRINK AVAILABILITY

OVERALL RESULT >> 121% INCREASE IN GREEN DRINK AVAILABILITY 70% DECREASE IN RED DRINK AVAILABILITY

		Carnegie Swim Centre	Glen Eira FC	Brighton Soccer Club	Harry's Kiosk at HHSC	Average
% change in drink availability	Green drinks	80%	183%	150%	72%	121%
	Amber drinks	225%	↑	↑	36%	
	Red drinks	-68%	-77%	-76%	-59%	-70%

↑ indicates increase from baseline of zero

## CHANGE IN NUMBER OF DRINKS SOLD

OVERALL RESULT >> NUMBER OF GREEN DRINKS SOLD ROSE BY 69% NUMBER OF RED DRINKS SOLD FELL BY 58% NO CHANGE IN OVERALL DRINK SALES



- A mix of 'statistically significant' and 'not significant, but favourable' results, showing a **positive shift towards GREEN and AMBER drinks, away from RED drinks**.
- This supports evidence from other nudge trials that 'making the healthy choice, the easy choice' does influence customer behaviour and that providing healthier options is a viable approach for business.

## DRINKS RESULTS continued

		Carnegie Swim Centre^	Glen Eira FC	Brighton Soccer Club	Harry's Kiosk at HHSC	Average
% change in the number of drinks sold	All drinks	7%	-33% <i>p value 0.39</i>	27% <i>p value 0.19</i>	-7% <i>p value 0.39</i>	-2%
	Green drinks	142%	19%	<b>102% *</b>	11%	69%
	Amber drinks	-6%	↑	↑*	83%	
	Red drinks	-50%	-75%	<b>-45% *</b>	<b>-63% *</b>	-58%

↑ indicates increase from baseline of zero

\* indicates statistically significant result

^ Analysis of statistical significance not possible at this site due to the format of sales data

## OTHER DRINKS MEASURES

Data analysis also considered the following:

- Change in proportion of fridge drinks sold (GREEN/AMBER/RED)
- Change in proportion of \$ sales from fridge drinks (GREEN/AMBER/RED)

**For both measures, the proportional contribution from GREEN drinks increased and from RED drinks, decreased.**

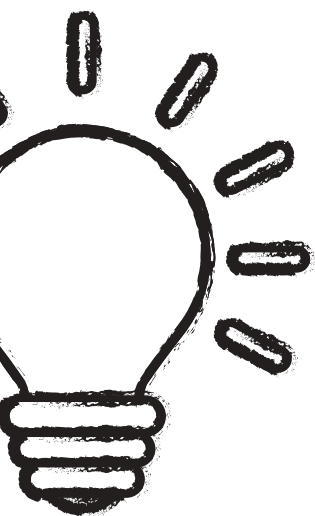
(See Site Summary Reports for details)

## FOOD RESULTS

Based on results from the 2 completed food nudges

INCREASE IN GREEN  
OR AMBER SNACK  
AVAILABILITY AT  
RELEVANT SITE

DECREASE  
IN RED SNACK  
AVAILABILITY AT  
BOTH SITES



*As the number of items sold was relatively small, a short nudge period did not produce large enough sales volumes for the results to be of statistical significance.*

*As sales were volatile from week to week and were not related to factors such as weather or attendance, a short baseline period did not adequately account for the inherent volatility.*

**Although the food-related results were inconclusive**, there were valuable learnings:

- Insight into settings with low sales volumes and/or high sales volatility and how this might influence methodology.
- Beyond formal nudge trials and into "nudge activities", product, pricing, placement and promotion will be key.

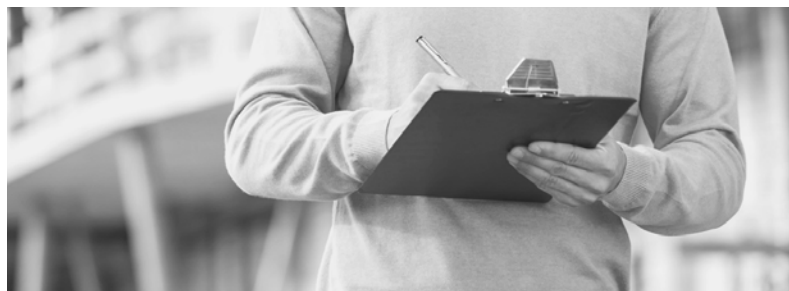
Data analysis also considered:

- Change in proportion of snacks sold (GREEN/AMBER/RED)
- Change in proportion of \$ sales from snacks (GREEN/AMBER/RED)

**For snacks sold, the proportional contribution from GREEN snacks did not change and from AMBER snacks, increased. The proportional contribution from RED snacks decreased.**

**For \$ sales, the proportional contribution from either GREEN or AMBER snacks increased and from RED snacks, decreased.**

(See Site Summary Reports for details)



## VISITOR/STAFF SURVEYING

from 5 sites

NO. OF SURVEYS

210

AGREE WITH  
HEALTHIER CHOICES

92%

92% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they support the outlet in continuing to offer healthier food and drinks AND ALSO that clubs and leisure centres should be offering healthier food and drinks for staff, members and visitors.

WHAT CAN OUTLETS DO TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE  
TO CHOOSE HEALTHIER FOOD AND DRINKS?



\* 104 responses grouped into themes

# MANAGER SURVEYING

from 5 sites

AGREE WITH  
HEALTHIER CHOICES

100%

Manager from all 5 sites  
endorsed the principle of  
offering healthy food and  
drinks in their venue.

## WHAT DO YOU FEEL YOU ACHIEVED THROUGH PARTICIPATING?

- ✓ Increased awareness of the influence of product placement
- ✓ Showing that healthy options can be sold without losing profit
- ✓ Better understanding of customer demographics and preferences
- ✓ Improved healthy options
- ✓ More informed workforce
- ✓ There are ways to encourage healthier purchasing without completely restricting choice

## POST-NUDGE INTENTIONS

Carnegie Swim Centre	Glen Eira FC	Brighton Soccer Club	Harry's Kiosk at HHSC
Maintain Healthy Choices fridge	Maintain Healthy Choices fridge (with need for GREEN alternatives to still water due to tap water campaign)	Reinstate Healthy Choices fridge (which was changed after trial ended)	Maintain Healthy Choices fridge (with consideration of G/A/R products to meet both customer demand and guidelines)
Will phase out some red drinks at another site and consider further improvements	Maintained snack nudge Have reduced the portion size of sweet snacks Looking at additional healthy food options	Looking at additional healthy food options	



# CHALLENGES, LEARNINGS & OTHER REFLECTIONS

## CHALLENGES



**Time pressure**, coupled with an ambitious project scope for the resources available and staff turnover, was the key challenge.

Project phases were necessarily condensed to complete the five site project within the funding time frame.

Time limitations generated three main risks:

1. potential to undermine relationships with site stakeholders
2. led to short trial lengths which limited the amount of data available for analysis
3. tested the capacity of HEWG members



**Recruitment** of sites proved challenging, with many organisations expressing initial interest before opting out or discontinuing contact with the project team.

One prospective site identified concern over loss of profit as the main reason, whilst lack of capacity or workload concerns appear to have been key for other sites.



## LEARNINGS

What would we do differently, given the same resourcing levels and initial capacity?

1. A longer project period and/or fewer trial sites.
2. Longer baseline periods to better address inherent sales volatility at low volume sites.
3. Longer nudge periods to allow for greater customer exposure to the interventions and “bigger” sales data sets.
4. “Bigger” nudges that make a more significant change to the food environment. Using examples from the project, if sweet snacks only contribute a small share of overall sales, make a bigger change e.g. a number of new green snacks on display and promoted whilst red snacks are less prominent and/or reduced in range. Alternatively, nudge in a higher sales areas such as hot food.
5. Focus on priority sales data so analysis time can be focused on the most critical areas.
6. Determine if there is capacity to test for statistical significance of data from all sites.
7. Clarify if the project intends to test for impact on profit, or only for impact on sales. Whilst these terms tend to be used interchangeably, if profitability is to be measured, details of the pricing and profit margin on products is required from the site and the analysis process is more complex.
8. Emphasise to site managers (even further) the importance of staff engagement and capacity building at sites, as this is critical to maintaining the integrity of the nudges and to encouraging ongoing work to improve menus.
9. Refine the customer survey to priority questions, which may enhance completion rates and reduce data collation tasks.



Energy (kJ)	815
(Cal)	195
Protein (g)	8.2
Fat, Total (g)	4.2
- Saturated Fat (g)	0.6
Carbohydrate (g)	28.7

## OTHER REFLECTIONS

1. The two-phased approach was beneficial, with learnings from Phase 1 used to improve the delivery of Phase 2.
2. The project responded to the implementation issues at one Phase 1 site by adopting a more intensive regime of monitoring and support. This involved greater 'hands-on' involvement from project staff (and less from the site staff) than might be typical or, indeed, recommended. Whilst costly in resource terms, the process did contribute to more effective implementation phases.
3. Sustainability concerns regarding promotion of bottled water were raised, with one club encouraging tap water and refillable bottles. These developments are to be anticipated and encouraged in club settings, but will require adaptation of Healthy Choices fridge plans e.g. GREEN/AMBER alternatives to still water, encourage RED drinks off display/off sale, etc.
4. Although strongly encouraged, HEAS training was only completed in two of the five trial sites – only by management at one site and only by staff at another. Competing workload demands and costs to business were cited as the barriers. In the future it will be important to explore other methods to facilitate training e.g. incentivise completion or offer group training to operators.
5. HEAS support was invaluable and would only be enhanced by additional resourcing.



## RESOURCES DEVELOPED

- Numerous project resources, including recruitment information sheets, menu assessment summaries, fridge planograms and results overviews
- Five discrete summary reports, each including site results and a comprehensive set of “challenges and learnings”

the main drinks fridge items, the vending machine and the water cooler on a fridge shelf facing the customer equate to the following:

Main Drinks Fridge	
Positions	As % of total positions
24	49%
11	22%
14	29%
49	

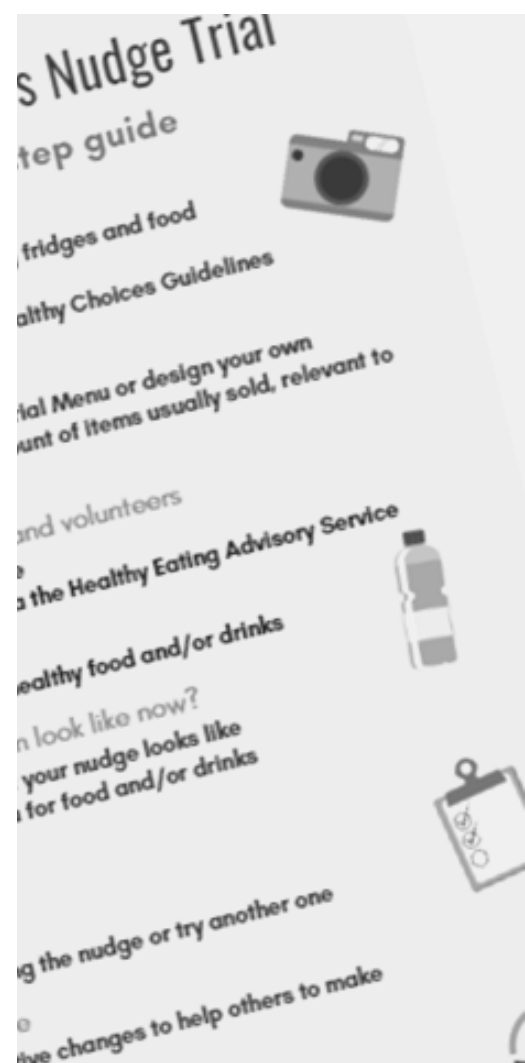
  

Vending Machine (excl. Vending Machine)	
Positions	As % of total positions
69.4%	
19.2%	
11.4%	

All Menu items by Food	
Drinks	Green
Snacks	27.4%
Cold foods	3%
Hot foods	0%
	0%

ing Advisory Service Foodchecker website



# PARTNERSHIP GROWTH & CAPACITY BUILDING

HEWG members reported that the Nudge Trial Project had:

- ✓ been a relevant partnership undertaking
- ✓ increased collaboration amongst the group
- ✓ contributed to the achievement of member organisation's operational plans
- ✓ been an effective use of both HEWG and member organisation time and resources
- ✓ enhanced individual worker understanding of nudge trial implementation and confidence in devising and implementing similar healthy eating strategies

\* Collected via surveying of members

Three workshops on Collective Impact and three on Systems Thinking were delivered across the span of the project. Learning was applied to project delivery and, crucially, engaged HEWG members in discussion about desired models for working collectively in the future.

NO. OF  
WORKSHOPS

6

NO. OF  
PARTICIPANTS

81

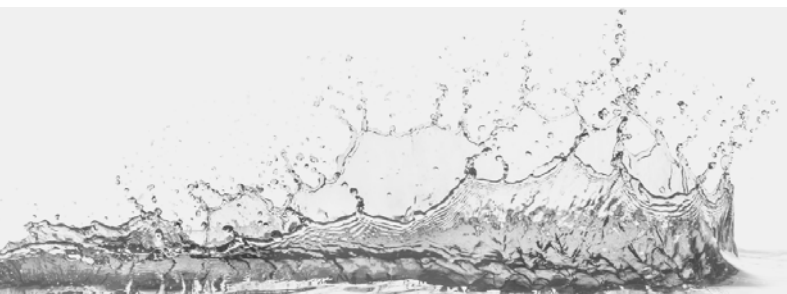
NO. OF  
ORGANISATIONS

14

"Clarity around the bigger picture, 'reason for being' as a partnership..."

"The time is right for the group to start thinking more strategically about our agenda moving forward and how the Healthy Choices Nudge Trial project will become one part of a broader program of work."

"...it feels like we have moved further along the line to locking in a shared understanding and delivery model from here."



## CONCLUSION

The project achieved its key objectives, adding to understanding of the role of the sales environment in positively influencing healthier consumer choices, whilst building the HEWG partnership and capacity.

Whilst some of the project learnings apply most particularly to formal nudge trials, many can be applied more generally to “nudge activities”. It is expected the project will provide a platform for further advocacy and partnership work by the HEWG in these settings, with the “local evidence” regarded as valuable for generating interest.

In particular, the HEWG can now use the drinks results to confidently promote Healthy Choices drink changes to other sporting clubs and leisure centres within the SMPCP catchment.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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