

Funding for this project was contributed to by Wimmera PCP as part of their Small Enabler Grants Program

<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Lunchtime Garden Club</b>
<b>Year:</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Lead Agencies:</b>	<b>Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning &amp; Employment Network, Horsham Primary School</b>
<b>Partners:</b>	<b>Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, Bunnings Horsham, Wimmera Regional Library, Horsham Apex Club, St Brigid's College</b>



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## **Project Description:**

### **Background:**

In 2018 a Lunchtime Garden Club was formed at Horsham Primary School (Rasmussen Campus) to teach students about growing food, sustainability and healthy eating. The club also aimed to promote mentorship and peer connections including across cultures. Students, volunteers and community partners had a vision to reinvigorate the school's existing vegetable, bush tucker and sensory gardens and ensure these gardens will be thriving and vibrant learning environments into the future.

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New garden improvements were done by a team of helpers including student club members, LLEN staff and volunteers from their MATES Mentor program. St Brigid's College VCAL students prepared garden beds including adding new soil. Horsham Apex Club members laid stone mulch. New Indigenous and bush tucker plants were introduced in areas under the guidance of Wimmera Catchment Management Authority's Community Engagement Officer, Rae Talbot. A worm farm was built with the assistance of Bunnings Horsham. A watering system was reinstalled.

The garden space is now flourishing and contributing to an enriched curriculum. Children have discovered many new healthy food experiences including eating zucchini chips, tasting tomatoes and passion fruit straight off the vine and roasting potatoes they have grown from old organic ones. On occasions they share a fruit platter. Children are also encouraged to take home produce and plants to share with families.

New skills have been learnt including composting, mulching, seed collection and propagation. Poppy seeds were planted to bloom in time for ANZAC Remembrance Day. Other special event days, such as National Tree Planting Day have given students the opportunity to introduce families and friends to the garden.

Children are learning more about aboriginal culture and the significance of native plants for indigenous food and medicine. Wimmera Catchment Management Authority recently hosted an activity of 'rock art' which recognises Australian animals and their part within the environment. The garden continues to be a space of connection and inclusiveness. The garden club sustains on average 17 children per week, with older children often seen helping younger ones with garden tasks.

In November 2018 Horsham Primary School Rasmussen Campus' sensory garden won a major accolade. In recognition for their work, the school won the award **Most Engaging Garden for Learning** at the Victorian Schools Garden Awards.

The Lunchtime Garden Club has had a lasting impact on the children and the school community. Children have increased their awareness and behaviours around healthy lifestyles, developed skills to combat food insecurities and absorbed key messages around mateship and inclusion.

The club has inspired children to celebrate their gardening achievements, while promoting a lifelong connection with the natural environment.

*Every student a gardener, every garden a classroom*

