1.1. Why take action on low fruit and vegetable consumption in Tasmania?

The Tasmanian health system is facing financial stressors due to an aging population and the increasing burden of chronic disease across the populous. Tasmania also is blessed with a dispersed and varied horticulture industry that produces high quality locally grown fruit and vegetables.

Adequate vegetable and fruit consumption plays a very important role in nutritional wellbeing. We know from evidence-based research that adequate daily consumption of vegetables and fruit appears to have protective effects against obesity, type II diabetes, coronary heart disease, some cancers and stroke. Epidemiological studies have shown a positive correlation between their increased consumption and the decreased risk of a number of chronic preventable diseases.

Chronic dietary related disease such as obesity and cardiovascular disease is continuing to escalate in Tasmania so too does the health care costs. Therefore with the above mentioned evidence that increasing vegetable and fruit consumption shows positive impacts on the health of a population and with the Tasmanian horticulture sector being a significant driver of regional Tasmanian economy any increase in demand will both positively impact in the reduction in health spending whilst increasing the viability of the horticulture sector and the regions and value chain that supports them.

Evidence continues to indicate that Tasmanians do not consume enough vegetables and fruit. Six (6) out of every seven (7) Tasmanians are not meeting the national recommendations of five (5) serves of vegetables per day. Recommended fruit consumption intake in Tasmanian adults has fallen from fifty four per cent (54%) to forty three per cent (43%) over the last ten (10) years.

Prevention measures have become a high priority for both State and Federal Government, and promoting good nutrition is a central platform of the National Partnership on Health Agreement. As a signatory to the National Partnership on Preventative Health, the Tasmanian Government has acknowledged the importance and urgency of increasing Tasmanians consumption of fruit and vegetables now and into the future.

With increased consumption of fruit and vegetables linked to substantial health, economic and community benefits, Eat Well Tasmania feel strongly that nutrition education and promotion needs to be viewed as a ‘key investment’ by State and Federal Government.


In the last 15 years we have seen a significant rise in the rate of overweight and obesity in Australia. Adequate vegetable and fruit consumption is a main factor that can contribute to prevention of overweight and obesity and other chronic dietary related diseases such as heart disease.
1.2. The health and economic benefits of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption

Research from around the world provides convincing evidence that nutrition promotion makes a difference, is cost effective and cost saving:

1.3. Benefits to the health sector

Increasing consumption of vegetables and fruit will save millions of dollars in health care costs. For example, in relation to vegetable and fruit promotion projects, it has been estimated that:

- Increasing vegetable intake by one serve a day would save $24.4 million dollars per year from the Australian health costs of breast and lung cancers

- Increasing fruit intake by one serve a day would save $8.6 million dollars per year from the Australian health costs of breast and lung cancers

- Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption by just one serve per person per day would save the Australian health care system $157 million per year in relation to heart disease alone

- Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption by one serve per day would result in direct health care savings of $180 million annually Australia wide

Economic benefits to industry

Both nationally and at a state level the fruit and vegetable industry is under threat from overseas imports. Ongoing advocacy and media dialogue around this and related issues such as the regulation and cost imposed on farmers continue across Tasmania. Yet, the potential economic boost to the horticulture industry, with increasing consumption of local produce would bring a welcomed economic boost to Tasmania.

Increasing domestic consumption of vegetables and fruit would provide economic benefits for businesses involved directly and indirectly in the horticultural production and distribution chain. Increasing domestic consumption of vegetables and fruit will also increase prosperity of rural communities resulting in economic and social benefits.

This one initiative provides opportunities to reduce the long term health care costs whilst immediately increasing jobs and economic prosperity across Tasmania.


6 Marks G et al., 2001
2. Proposal

This submission will put forward a proposal to invest in Eat Well Tasmania to undertake vegetable and fruit education and promotion through the In with Veg project.

2.1 In with Veg Project

This will be a three year project which has the potential to aid in increasing Tasmanian fruit and vegetable consumption, contributing to the following benefits of increased vegetable and fruit consumption:

- Tasmanians will enjoy better health;
- Costs of ill health to government, employers and individuals will be reduced;
- Profits to the horticultural sector will be increased; and
- There will be social and economic benefits for the rural communities that rely on the vegetable and fruit industry. 7

The In with Veg project will focus on vegetable and fruit education and promotion in two specific settings, that is:

- Food Industry Retail sector; and
- Tasmanian Community

2.1.1 Investment

Total estimated Investment: $590,000 over three years as follows:

Project Year Investment

1  $190,000
2  $195,000
3  $205,000

7 Miller M. 2002, The Case for a Five-Year Campaign to Increase Vegetable and Fruit Consumption in Australia, SIGNAL and the National Vegetable and Fruit Coalition.

8 Ex Gst and does not include indexation
2.1.2 Vision

The purpose of In with Veg Project is to undertake vegetable and fruit education and promotion activities that aim to:

- Increase the percentage of Tasmanians who consume vegetables and fruit every day;
- Increase the percentage of Tasmanians who consume vegetables and fruit at or above the recommended level for health and wellbeing, recommended by the Australian Dietary Guidelines;
- Increase the percentage of Tasmanians who consume locally grown vegetables and fruit; and
- Increase collaboration between key stakeholders to promote the health benefits of fruit and vegetables.

2.1.3 Outcomes

- Increased Tasmanian fruit and vegetable consumption (mitigating import replacement and securing jobs for the future);
- Enhanced health and wellbeing for children and families;
- Reduced costs of ill health to the government, employers and individuals;
- Increased profits for the Tasmanian vegetable and fruit industry and their value chain; and
- Social and economic benefits for communities that rely on Tasmania’s vegetable and fruit industry.

2.1.4 Objectives

The In with Veg Project Objectives are to:

1. Increase fruit and vegetable knowledge in food industry retail staff;

2. To increase awareness of the benefits of locally grown vegetables and fruit in terms of taste, convenience, low relative cost, safety, and health;

3. Increase demand for Tasmanian grown fruit and vegetables that the industry offers. Thus reducing the demand on imported goods.

4. To build capacity for community education around knowledge of fruit and vegetables including product knowledge, selection and preparation;

5. Implement a range of targeted fruit and vegetables education messages across a range of community settings;

6. Increase availability of simplified health literacy focused health messages and education materials conveying the health benefits of fruit and vegetables and

7. Increase the percentage of Tasmanians with knowledge of the recommended daily serves of vegetables and fruit.

Messages will be health literacy focused.
2.1.5 Outputs

In with Veg Project will deliver the following outputs:

- Development of simplified health literacy focused messages around the health benefits of fruit and vegetables;

- Marketing strategies to encourage increased Tasmanian consumption of vegetables and fruit via a viral social media campaign around:
  - the health benefits of fruit and vegetables
  - benefits to industry by increasing local fruit consumption
  - Increasing engagement in local food retailers and driving spend within the region’s economies.

- Further development of a ‘What’s in Season Phone App’, allowing easy access to vegetables and fruit in with season, selection, storage and preparation tips;

- Development and delivery of education resource packages for:
  - Community workers- (train the trainer package)
  - Food industry retailers and staff

- Development and delivery of ‘hands on’ education workshops around fruit and vegetable identification, storage and use; and

- Development of a supermarket tour and information package around local produce for food industry retailers

2.1.6 Implementation Strategy

EWTi is seeking investment in fruit and vegetable promotion strategies through the In with Veg Project, initially for a period of three years. Key project messages and work would be undertaken and delivered in the following three key settings:

- Media, including the social media platform

- Community

- Food Industry (retailers and restaurants).

A comprehensive evaluation plan will be developed as part of the proposed activities. In summary, the evaluation plan will use a number of strategies to investigate:

Process indicators such as participation, reach, satisfaction with the activities, the assistance provided and resources developed, partnerships formed, timing and implementation, distribution of resources, satisfaction as assessed by the steering committee and project officer

- Impact indicators such as awareness of the activities, changes made in various settings that will continue beyond the life of the activities, changes in knowledge, skills and confidence, spin-off benefits, media generated and partnerships.
Situational Assessment

Organisation’s Role and Functions

Eat Well Tasmania is an incorporated organisation, with its board coming from both the Tasmanian food Industry and the health sector, which drives and supports collaboration around nutrition promotion in Tasmania. The Eat Well Tasmania program has operated since 1995, providing support and assistance for projects and activities that promote healthy eating. Eat Well Tasmania facilitates collaborative efforts that focus on creating healthy environments and use evidence-based and best practice approaches.

The goal of Eat Well Tasmania is to improve the nutritional wellbeing of all Tasmanians and contribute to the reduction of diet-related health problems (such as cardio-vascular disease, diabetes, obesity and some cancers), by maximising the impact of food and nutrition promotion.

The Eat Well Tasmania program aims to improve the nutritional wellbeing of all Tasmanians and support the local food industry by:

- Promoting increased awareness of the importance of healthy food choices, especially of Tasmanian origin;
- Increasing the level of inter-sectoral action in nutrition promotion; and
- Coordinating and raising the profile of projects, activities and campaigns consistent with the Australian Dietary Guideline.

Eat Well Tasmania has a long track record in successful design, implementation and management of nutrition and food related projects and activities across the State, and is well placed to implement the In with Veg project due to having access to all the elements that are recognised as being essential for successful projects, including:

- Evidence-based policy: The proposed strategies compliment the outcomes of a number of strategic documents and policies including Tasmania Together, the Tasmanian Food and Nutrition Policy (2004), Eat Well Australia and Acting on Australia’s Weight.
- Shared responsibility: The proposed strategies would be managed by EWTi, which is committed to working in partnership to deliver outcomes. Specifically EWTi has a sound working relationship with the vegetable and fruit industry and an extensive network of partners in a broad range of sectors including community, government and non-government, education, food industry, media and private sectors.
- Strong communication focus: Work has already been undertaken to develop a range of communication tools including specific promotional messages and mass media materials. EWTi has a good working relationship with the media sector and has experience using a range of communication strategies.
- Community level program, policy and environmental support: An extensive network of projects and activities are already part of the Eat Well Tasmania umbrella program. The proposed strategies would provide an ideal link with these local level activities. As identified above numerous policy documents support the

Recent examples include:

1) HOVER Project: Successful implementation of a healthier vending movement in Tasmania, including the development of a health vending criteria for Tasmania and the introduction of Healthier vending machines across Tasmanian worksites (Outcomes from this project continue).

2) Eat Well Grow Well Project, which grew increased the Tasmania Community Garden Network by over 80 community gardens during the project life and assisted another 13 communities successfully gain funding for the establishment of community gardens.
implementation of vegetable and fruit promotion activities. In addition, there is environmental support for the availability of vegetables and fruit in Tasmania. Finally, Eat Well Tasmania is an independent non-profit organisation with no commercial endeavours.

- Sustained effort and ongoing evaluation: Eat Well Tasmania recognises the need for sustainable outcomes and ongoing evaluation, and has access to expertise in this area. Evaluating the impact of vegetable and fruit promotion activities would be considered an essential part of the In with Veg Project.

3. Recommendation

_That the Tasmanian Government prioritise increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, by investing in Eat Well Tasmania to deliver fruit and vegetable promotion and education across Tasmania, through the In with Veg Project._

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