

Rural Health and Research Congress
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HEALTHIER OILS PROGRAM:

Pooling Knowledge for Sustainable Changes in Food Supply

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Healthy Eating – a cornerstone of heart health

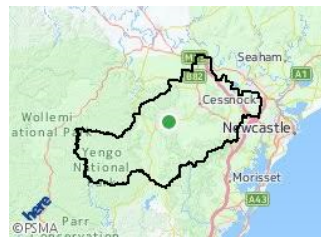
Healthy fat choices
including using cooking oils like olive, canola, peanut, sunflower etc

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Cessnock LGA Healthier Oils Program (2011- present)

- Health promotion program led by the Heart Foundation
- Local independent food outlets commit to using only healthier cooking oils
- Council Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) monitor oil choices, educate and encourage outlets to choose healthier oils
- **GOAL:** To reduce heart disease risk by reducing the unhealthy fats present in fried meals and snacks served* in the Cessnock LGA



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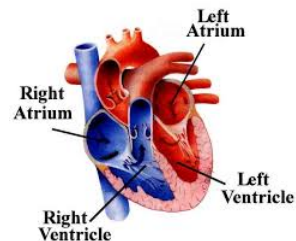
*by eligible outlets = independent, "non-chain" outlets

www.heartfoundation.org.au/programs/healthier-oils-program

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Rationale

- Cessnock LGA – rural area with high rates of hospitalisation & mortality from heart disease*
- High levels of social disadvantage (IRSD-Quintile 2)*
- 31% of local adults have high cholesterol*
- Program targets the **local food environment** (food supply) not the consumer



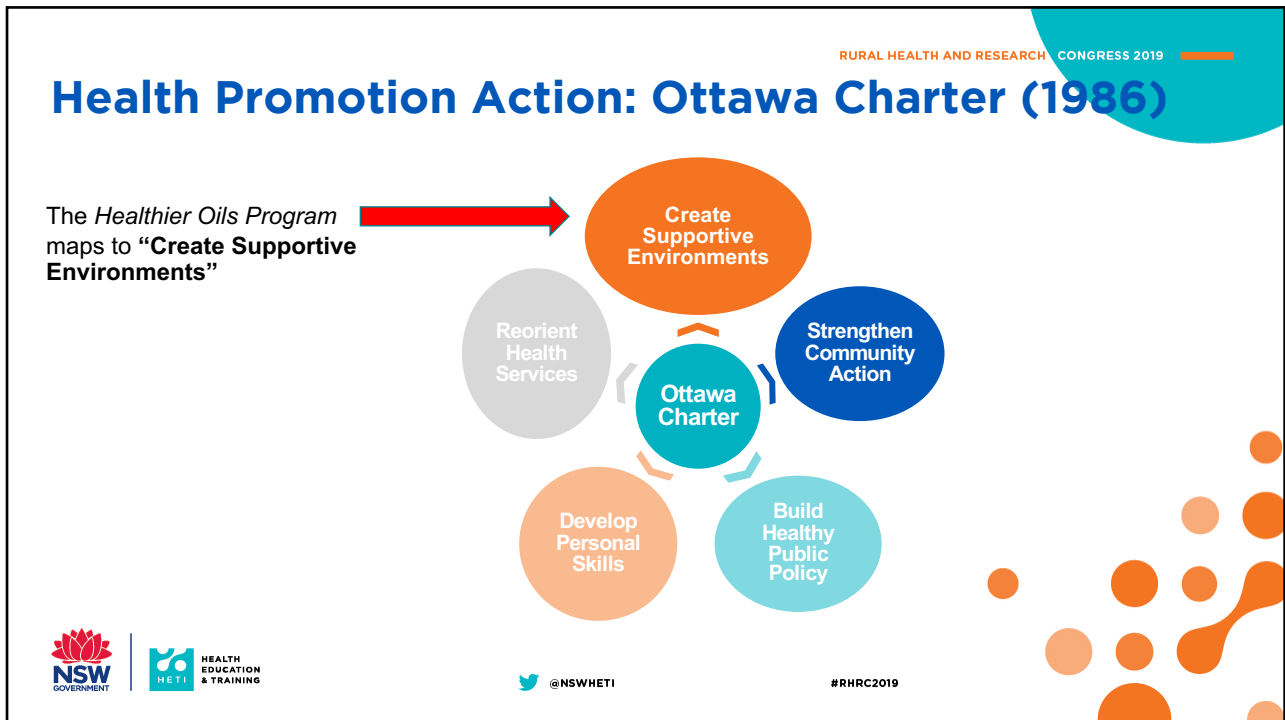
* Reference: Heart Foundation Heart Maps, Local Profiles; Cessnock LGA . www.heartfoundation.org.au . Accessed 4.9.19
<https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/for-professionals/heart-maps/australian-heart-maps>



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Key Program Activities

- **Baseline survey** (50 local food outlets; Apr-Jul 2011)
- **Formation of working party** (Feb 2011)
- **Joint Project Plan**
- **EHO engagement of food outlets** (routine inspections)
- **Modify Council inspection form** (oil health status recorded i.e. HO / non-HO)
- **Promotion** - local media stories, bus advertisement, postcards & Council website
- **Incentive Program** i.e. Award Certificates
- **Healthy Oil Trial** (6 x food outlets)
- **Formal evaluation - 2017**

Ottawa Charter

Reorient Health Services

Create Supportive Environments

Strengthen Community Action

Build Healthy Public Policy

Develop Personal Skills

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Working in Collaboration

Working Party Members:

- **Cessnock City Council**
 - Environmental Health Officers & Team Leader
- **Heart Foundation**
 - Regional Health Promotion Coordinator & Food Supply Manager
- **Hunter New England Local Health District**
 - Community Dietitian
- **Samaritans Foundation**
 - Coalfields Healthy Heartbeat Program Officer
- **Local Food Business representatives**



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Working in Collaboration

HOP Working Party – how did we operate?

- **Meet face to face; 90 mins duration, 3 x / year (minimum) at the Council**
- **Work under a Terms of Reference**
- **Up to 10 members attend; usually around 6.**
- *Heart Foundation staff member prepared agendas & minutes*
- **Members share action items**
- *Communication between meetings via email/phone*



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Approach to Evaluation of the HOP

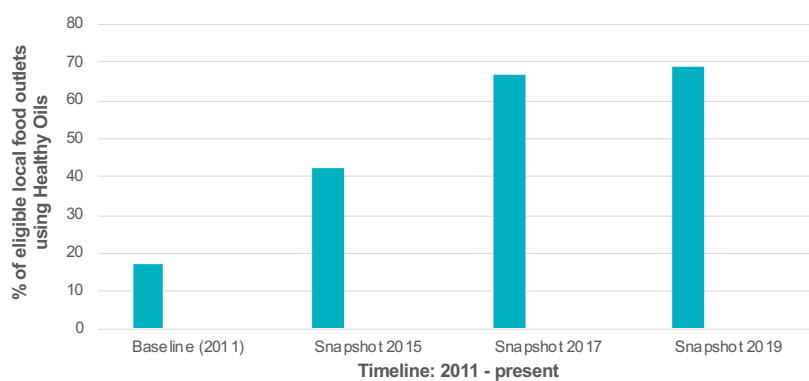
- Early 2017 - Heart Foundation engaged University of Sydney
- **Interviews**, conducted by Uni research assistant, February 2017:
 - *Independent food outlet operators* x 16;
 - *General community* x 27; and
 - *Working Party Members* x 10.
- **Program Uptake “Snapshots”** (using Council data from inspections)
- **Outputs** -
 - *Brief Evaluation Report for local stakeholders (2018)*
 - *Manuscript for peer reviewed journal (unpublished to date)*



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Impact – Program Uptake amongst target group



“One hotel bistro removed 1,155 kg of saturated fats from their meals annually after switching to a healthier cooking oil”

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Evaluation: Working Party Perspectives

METHOD:

- Semi-structured interviews; February 2017
- 10 item questionnaire; open ended questions
- Duration: 10 – 15 minutes
- Interviews recorded & transcribed
- **Qualitative data re-visited in 2019 for the RH&RC**

RQ: "To what extent did the working party increase the capacity of stakeholders to work towards a healthier food supply?"



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Qualitative analysis – Focus Area 1:

Role of Working Party in establishing and implementing the Cessnock LGA HOP:

- **Through its diverse membership the working party offered a wide knowledge/skill base**

"I think the working party has been the engine room.. It has provided the creative ideas, and the expertise needed to deliver the program" HP 2

- **Ensuring program momentum by keeping Council EHOs supported & energised**

"It's crucial, actually, it keeps momentum of the program.. So what you find is leading up to and after the meeting, there's a flurry of activity" CR 1

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Key:
HP = Health Professional
CR = Council Representative

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Qualitative analysis – Focus Area 1:

Role of Working Party in establishing and implementing the Cessnock LGA HOP:

- **Through food business representation, facilitating understanding of the setting**

“They have taught us so much about using cooking oils and the importance of having a program that would fit with the business model of small food outlets” HP 2
- **Embedding the program in community – “Planned Locally – Delivered Locally”**

“We (the HF) couldn’t do the program without a relationship, first of all with Council but for that working party to facilitate us to have a relationship with people who work and live in Cessnock” HP 2



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Qualitative analysis – Focus Area 1:

Role of Working Party in establishing and implementing the Cessnock LGA HOP:

- **Facilitating access to useful contacts and resources**

“I have also been able to use some contacts that I have, so I can get some donations in order to run some oil trials.. We got a donation of 1000L of hi-oleic canola oil. ...” FBR 1
- **Fostering broad program ownership & optimising reach**

“By all means, Council could probably run the program by themselves. However to actually get a meaningful result, to get the takeaways, pubs and clubs on board, to have reps from the industry who are recognised within the local area by those in the sector, it helps break down those barriers” CR 1



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 Key: FBR= Food Business representative
CR = Council representative

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Qualitative analysis – Focus Area 2:

Most Effective Program Strategy used in the Cessnock LGA HOP:

- **EHO engagement with food business managers:**

"Friendly, approachable, face-to-face and one-on-one interaction of Council EHOs with food business managers - this enabled successful distribution of the purpose of the project and how to swap to a healthy oil. ..." HP 3

"Yeah we've tried a lot of things, with the postcards, and advertising on the backs of buses and press releases, they're all very valuable but the hands on work by the EHOs is undoubtedly the key" FBR 1



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Qualitative analysis – Focus Area 3:

Sustainability of Cessnock LGA HOP:

- **HOP featured in Council documents (H&WB Plan) & EHO food inspection instrument**

"The Council inspection proforma, that is used each and every time, now includes a section for oils. I see that as a key factor that means this program will be sustainable" HP 2

"It is something we (Council) can continue. It's been ongoing now for the last number of years and I think as long as we can keep the momentum going and keep them invigorated, most definitely" CR 1



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Qualitative analysis – Focus Area 3:

Sustainability of Cessnock LGA HOP: How can we help keep the HOP sustainable?

- **Build more community engagement**

*"Kinda driving that consumer expectation within the community ...so that consumers **want** to purchase their food from these (healthy oil) outlets" CR 3*

- **Systematically engage new food outlets (business turnover)**

"the thing is new food premises are popping up in town like nothing else.. So we need to keep on contacting these businesses" FBR 1

- **Continue to involve Council Mayor and Executive (for continued support)**

"If we had a change in GM, managers, all at once, it might get lost – we need to keep it in the forefront of the Council's mind too. Definitely support from Council would keep this going .CR 1



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Take home message...

We already know (but often forget!) that grass roots health promotion programs, designed with the local context and needs in mind, with the broadest possible ownership and genuine (not token) participation by the target group will have the greatest chance of producing a successful (and sustainable) outcome.



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