



# **Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen Project Report**

**2009 – 2013**

**Endorsed 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

## Acknowledgement

SMPCP Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen Project has been a partnership project across the southern Mallee catchment which would not have been possible if not for the contribution from SMPCP Members and Associate Members.

Thank you too;

- Colleen Scriven, Project Coordinator 2010 - 2011, Gannawarra Shire Council
- All members of SMPCP Cooking Up a Storm Working Group for developing and leading the project
- Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen sites of Lakes District – Gannawarra LGA, Nyah West – Swan Hill LGA and Sea Lake – Buloke LGA

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview

The Cooking Up a Storm (CUaS) Community Kitchen Project commenced as a Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership (SMPCP) partnership project in 2009 with funding from the Department of Human Services Sustaining Community Wellbeing Grants. The CUaS Community Kitchen Project was incorporated into SMPCP Strategic and Operational Plan 2009 – 2012 under the Integrated Health Promotion (IHP) priority Promoting Healthy Lifestyles with the goal *To increase participation in physical activity and improve access to nutritious food*. The key objective for the CUaS Project was; *To establish 3 Community Kitchens (Cooking up a Storm Project)*. The funding was also aimed to support and increase social connections of drought affected communities, this aligned with SMPCP Mental Health and Social Connectedness priority.

### Process

SMPCP member agencies formed the CUaS Working Group in February 2010, which was a subcommittee of SMPCP Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Committee, with the purpose of developing the CUaS Community Kitchen Project. From July 2010 to June 2011 a Project Coordinator was engaged, auspiced by Gannawarra Shire Council, to coordinate the project with support from the CUaS Working Group and ultimately work with the three selected communities to establish a CUaS Community Kitchen.

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has progressed through three key stages;

- Project planning and development
- Community engagement, promotion and community selection
- Implementation and sustainability.

The planning and development stage was ultimately lengthier than had been expected but the end result was a suite of information and tools that informed eligible communities of the project, format of a community kitchen, benefits of a community kitchen and how to submit an expression of interest.

Methods used to engage with eligible communities included media promotion, community information sessions and providing information to established groups and networks but ultimately the most effective method was engaging with existing networks. When promotion to communities began the southern Mallee region was greatly impacted by floods so the project was placed on hold for approximately six weeks. Once the project recommenced it was noted that for some communities who had shown some interest a community kitchen was now outside their scope and capacity.

### Outcomes

The communities of Sea Lake – Buloke LGA, Nyah West – Swan Hill LGA and Lakes District – Gannawarra LGA were successful with their expression of interest however during the selection process it was recognised that all communities would need assistance to establish the community kitchens and as the Project Coordinator tenure was coming to an end CUaS Stage 2 was developed. This involved engaging and resourcing a supporting agency aligned with the LGA so they could dedicate staff and time to assist with the establishment of the CUaS Community Kitchen and move toward sustainability.

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has provided an opportunity for SMPCP members and associates to work in partnership on a catchment wide project that required delivery at a local level. The project has increased the knowledge of the CUaS Working Group members which can also be applied to future work of SMPCP. Some of the knowledge gained is as follows;

- Community Information sessions are a good place to gain knowledge of a community; you can assess the readiness and interest for a project or program, gain an understanding of the local assets both people and infrastructure and gain an insight into community structures such as communication and drivers
- A workshop is a good method of building the knowledge relating to key topics relevant to people participating in a program (CUaS Community Kitchen) and for leading organisers to gather information for potential strategies E.g. Engagement, promotion, development of supporting resources
- Working with local community networks is important but other strategies must be implemented to engage with others who are not involved in these mainstream groups. This can take a considerable amount of time and effort and thinking outside the 'box'

- There can be reluctance for community groups to lead and take ownership when there is support from a professional organisation. Applying strategies that are appropriate to the environment and with clear processes can be supportive of transition phases
- Recognise there is a variance in the thinking, skills and knowledge of all project partners. Take the time to discuss and agree on how tools particularly for evaluation purposes will be used so there is consistency across a partnership project.

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has shown that a partnership project involving three LGA's and a range of organisations can have success. Key items to be mindful of in establishing a partnership project right at the beginning are;

- Capacity of organisation to manage involvement for the life of the project
- Clear understanding of expectation, roles, responsibilities and commitment
- Process to ensure continuity with change of staff so organisation involvement is maintained at expected level
- When commitment from the organisations is made involvement at all levels is expected to be maintained for the life of the project

Throughout CUaS Community Kitchen Project guiding documents have been developed and endorsed by the CUaS Working Group, it is possible they could have been used more strongly to guide the work being undertaken and ensure progress of what had been agreed to. The partnership did recognise evaluation timeframes were prescriptive and did not accommodate the different stages of each CUaS Community Kitchen; the working group members made appropriate adjustments. More work should have been undertaken discussing the evaluation tools so there was consistency across the catchment; overall the evaluation and reporting mechanisms have worked well in monitoring the enablers and barriers of the CUaS Community Kitchens.

Throughout the CUaS Community Kitchen Project there have been four SMPCP member agencies that have been the leaders; these are Gannawarra Shire Council, Swan Hill District Health, Northern Districts Community Health Service and Mallee Track Health and Community Services – Sea Lake Neighbourhood House.

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has shown that communities do look for organisations to lead and provide significant leadership in the initiation and development of new initiatives or programs, however this can vary depending on the 'readiness' of a community and the assets both physical and practical that are available. Reliance on an organisation needs to be managed with strategies in place at the start that will accommodate resources that are available, capacity of the organisation, adaptive processes to meet the progress of community and inclusion of sustainable activity.

## Conclusion

It was found that strategies needed to be ongoing in engaging others into the community kitchens to maintain numbers for viability; support and action for this was required and looked for from the supporting lead agency. Communities do require support from organisations for more than twelve months if a project or program is to become sustainable.

*The expected outcome of one established and sustained CUaS Community Kitchen in the LGA's of Buloke, Gannawarra and Swan Hill has partly been met with a CUaS Community Kitchen being maintained in Gannawarra LGA in the Lakes District community.*

The CUaS Community Kitchens did increase the knowledge of participants to actions that can contribute to healthier lifestyles relating to ingredients and food choices, cooking skills and budgets which may go some way to increasing choices made to accessing nutritious food. Within the community kitchens nutrition is a consideration when choosing what to cook as well as access to all ingredients from regular sources such as supermarkets or home grown produce.

*The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has not increased access to nutritious food but has possibly increased consumption of nutritious food.*

The CUaS Community Kitchens have all reported that the main reason for participants to join the community kitchen was to increase social contact and make new friends. The setting of a community kitchen works very well in promoting and offering opportunities for community members to be socially connected. The CUaS

Community Kitchen Project has demonstrated that the environment greatly enables people to meet others, remove prejudices that may come with social position and develop confidence and networks that are applicable in the broader community. The community kitchen setting works well for youth and adults, males and females, it can be flexible to accommodate the requirements of participants with decision making done as a collective.

*Community members have reported CUaS Community Kitchens have promoted and offered opportunities for all participants to be socially connected with the community.*

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been drawn from the information and knowledge gained from the CUaS Community Kitchen Project. The project has highlighted considerations relating to *Evidence, Community Engagement, Capacity Building and Partnerships* that SMPCP member, associate members and others could consider strengthening their work relating to integrated health promotion and working with the community.

### **Evidence**

- Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee build their understanding of the food systems in the southern Mallee catchment by considering the following;
  - Victorian healthy food basket survey data
  - Explore the role of local food production and markets as supports for access to nutritious food e.g. Koondrook Barham farmers market
  - Exploring community development approaches to increasing food access
- SMPCP members and associates thoroughly assess and understand community assets, enablers and barriers prior to initiating community projects and programs and be mindful of capacity of small communities

### **Community Engagement**

- SMPCP members maintain the link between the CUaS Community Kitchen sites and supporting agency to assist with engagement for future work relating to Integrated Health Promotion activity, food access, social inclusion and other activities
- SMPCP members and associates adopt a broad range of strategies to engage and inform communities of future opportunities and projects available to the community

### **Capacity Building**

- Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee reflect on the outcomes of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report and utilise in building capacity of SMPCP members, associates and others in the areas of;
  - Community needs assessment
  - Community engagement and development
  - Project management
- Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee consider options to build the capacity of agencies to work in partnership including;
  - Understanding the roles and responsibilities when working in partnership
  - Planning, implementation and evaluation
  - Sourcing resources
- Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee investigate opportunities to build the knowledge of members in regards to all aspects of Integrated Health Promotion evaluation

### **Partnerships**

- Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee present the learning of CUaS Community Kitchen Project to the partnership
- SMPCP continue to look for opportunities to undertake catchment wide projects which incorporates local level work

## OVERVIEW

### Introduction

The Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership (SMPCP) members including; Swan Hill District Health (SHDH), Swan Hill Rural City Council (SHRCC), Kerang District Health (KDH) and East Wimmera Health Service (EWHS) applied and received funding through Sustaining Community Wellbeing Grants Program, Department of Human Services, to start a community kitchen program, (Cooking up a Storm in Rural Communities). The Community Kitchens Model was initially developed by Frankston Community Health Service based on the Canadian Community Kitchens concept. Community kitchens provide an opportunity for small rural communities to come together to socialise, cook and eat nutritious, delicious and affordable meals. The model also provides an opportunity for participants to develop teamwork, leadership, and budgeting, cooking and shopping skills while building their self-confidence.

The SMPCP completed and submitted to the Department Health (DH) the SMPCP 2009-2012 Strategic and Operational Plans which had 4 agreed priorities which were;

- Mental Well-being and Social Connectedness – with a focus on mental health and family violence.
- Promoting Healthy Lifestyles – with a focus on preventing chronic diseases through physical activity and nutrition.
- Management of Chronic Diseases – with a focus on Diabetes and Cardiovascular diseases
- Partnership & Governance

Within the Promoting Healthy Lifestyles priority the Cooking Up a Storm (CUaS) Project was one of the key activities to be implemented. The following information provides an overview of the CUaS project within the SMPCP 2009 – 2012 Strategic Plan.

The Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Priority has the following **Mission**;

“The SMPCP members and other key stakeholders will work together in a planned way for the next three years to increase opportunities for participation in physical activity and promote accessible and nutritious food in our communities”.

**Goal:** To increase participation in physical activity and improve access to nutritious food

**Objectives:**

To establish 3 Community Kitchens (Cooking up a Storm Project)

The following 2 objectives also apply to the CUaS Community Kitchen Project however not all strategies are relevant to the CUaS project.

- To promote nutritious food (fruit and vegetable)
- To build capacity of agencies and professionals to support and promote healthy lifestyle initiatives

**Deliverables: (outcomes)**

- A sustainable program will be developed for implementation in three rural & remote communities in the SMPCP catchment area (1 per LGA)

*Refer to the SMPCP 2009 – 2012 Strategic & Operational Plans specifically the Integrated Health Promotion Plan component of the Promoting Healthy Lifestyles priority for further detailed information.*

The funding for the project was also aimed to support and increase social connections of drought affected communities, this aligned with SMPCP Mental Health and Social Connectedness priority.

In line with the directive from Department of Health in regards to Integrated Health Promotion evaluation requirements for both PCP's and the Community Women's Health Health Promotion funded agencies, the CUaS Working Group and Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee agreed to evaluate the objective: **To establish 3 Community Kitchens (Cooking up a Storm Project).**

It was agreed evaluation of Cooking Up a Storm Project would measure:

- If the process undertaken in engaging stakeholders has realised productive partnerships
- Has the preparation and implementation process of the project resulted in community kitchens
- If the community kitchens are being sustained independently
- There is increased access to nutritious food
- The kitchens are inclusive of all in the community

## Summary of Stages of Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen Project

### February – June 2010

In February 2010 the first meeting was held in Kerang for the CUaS Community Kitchen Project with the aim to establish a Working Group from SMPCP member and associate member agencies.

The expected role of the CUaS Working Group was to ensure progression for the implementation of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project that was a part of the SMPCP 2009-2012 Strategic & Operational Plans and support the CUaS Community Kitchen Project Coordinator once they were employed.

The agenda for the initial meeting included an overview of the CUaS Project Brief, draft Terms of Reference and expected process for deciding the location of three communities to establish CUaS community kitchens.

During the first six months project documents that had been identified as being required to promote and inform communities of the CUaS Community Kitchen project and opportunity were commenced.

### July – December 2010

In July 2010 the CUaS Project Coordinator commenced auspiced by Gannawarra Shire Council. The Project Coordinator role was to support the SMPCP Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Committee and the CUaS Working Group in planning, implementing and evaluating the CUaS Community Kitchen Project. The Project Coordinator was to be responsible for the promotion and administration of the CUaS Community Kitchen at the LGA level including liaising with communities in which the community kitchens were to be located and ensuring the future sustainability of the project.

In July 2010 East Wimmera Health Service received funding for the Cook In Project which was to establish community kitchens in the Buloke LGA communities of Birchip, Charlton, Donald and Wycheproof. It was agreed CUaS community kitchen project would be directed to northern communities of Buloke Shire but a strong link remain with the two projects.

In November 2010 work commenced to engage community members and/or organisations as the project moved toward being promoted via a range of means to all community within the target.

Community information sessions were scheduled to commence in January and early February 2011 with the expression of interest from communities due by 25<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

### January 2011 - June 2011

Unexpected and extensive flooding that had a significant impact on Gannawarra, Buloke and Swan Hill saw project activity postponed and an eventual delay of six weeks. Recommencing the project required rescheduling and additional Community Information Sessions, a repetition of earlier promotion through media and other avenues and a review of documents and program time line.

Expressions of interests from communities were due by the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2011 which were reviewed by a Selection Panel made up of SMPCP member agency representatives. It was also a requirement that nominated kitchen sites were inspected by the local government Environmental Health Officer who provided additional comment to the Selection Panel. This action was not efficient in Buloke and delayed the Selection Panel reviewing applications. The Project Coordinator provided additional notes including the support applicants required in completing the Expression of Interest and other barriers that were perceived.

The three successful communities were notified by mail and follow up phone call from the Project Coordinator in early June 2011.

Recommendations from the Selection Panel in what the communities would require to support the successful applicants establish and sustain their community kitchens, the expectation and capacity of stakeholders and process evaluation will inform and direct further planning and activity with the community and across the catchment.

The Project Coordinator Position concluded as of the end of June 2011.



### **July 2011 - June 2012**

It was evident the successful communities would require a support to establish the community kitchen therefore CUaS Stage Two was developed to ensure the assistance was provided and work toward sustainability.

With agreement three key agencies from each LGA were resourced to work closely with the CUaS community to establish a CUaS Community Kitchen. An agreement and Project Brief were developed to provide guidance and clarify expectation. Also the CUaS Working Group was reviewed and re-established with representatives from the lead organisations of Swan Hill District Health, Northern District Community Health Service, Mallee Track Health and Community Service – Sea Lake Neighbourhood House and East Wimmera Health Service and SMPCP staff.

During the following twelve months CUaS Community Kitchens commenced in Sea Lake - Buloke LGA; Lakes District - Gannawarra LGA; and Nyah West - Swan Hill LGA.

An activity of the CUaS Working Group was the design and delivery of the CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop.

### **July 2012 – June 2013**

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project continued with the CUaS Working Group meeting periodically during the year, modified evaluation was continued and with lead agencies working with communities to endeavour to have on going and sustaining community kitchens. Lakes District CUaS Community Kitchen in Gannawarra LGA is continuing to progress and take steps toward independent sustainability.

SMPCP Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Committee members continue to be updated and discuss the CUaS Community Kitchen Project at meetings.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The aim of evaluating the CUaS Community Kitchen Project was to provide detail on process and impact outcomes from the approaches taken throughout the project, demonstrate to others what has been learnt in working in a partnership across a geographically large catchment, approaches taken in the area of community development and enablers and barriers to be aware of in this method.

SMPCP Integrated Health Promotion (IHP) Evaluation Plan<sup>i</sup> including methods and tools was decided on through consultation and in agreement with SMPCP Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Committee and CUaS Working Group and CUaS Working Group Stage 2.

The evaluation plan was written with some hindsight due to a delay in receiving Evaluation Reporting Guidelines from the Department of Health covering the years 2009 – 2012 therefore evaluation tools such as meeting minutes and project documents that had consistently been used from the start of the project were utilised as records of process.

Process and impact measures were selected as viewed appropriate from the suite of IHP Performance Measures as provided by the Department of Health and suitable to the key strategies used within the project plan, these were as follows;

- Social Marketing and Health Information
- Community Action
- Settings and Supportive Environments
- Partnerships
- Workforce Development
- Organisational Development
- Resources

The evaluation plan for Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen Project was submitted to the Department of Health in April 2011.

For the year 2011 – 2012 a CUaS Reporting Template<sup>ii</sup> was developed to assist the leading agencies collect and record information for evaluation purposes. The CUaS Reporting Template identified if it was for process or impact information, what the IHP reporting measure was and which tool to use and key reportable areas.

Several tools that had been developed and available in the Community Kitchen's 'How To' Manual were utilised, these were;

- Participant Registration Form (Page 65 and 66)<sup>iii</sup>
- Session Summary Sheet (Page 64)<sup>iv</sup>
- Community Kitchen Before and After Participant Survey (Page 68 and 69)<sup>v</sup>

Other evaluation tools developed by the CUaS Working Group during 2011 – 12 were the CUaS Community Kitchen Participant Interview<sup>vi</sup> and CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop Participant Feedback Form.<sup>vii</sup>

The CUaS Working Group developed and hosted the CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop in March 2012. A CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop Evaluation and Outcome Report<sup>viii</sup> was compiled to capture the information shared and knowledge gained by all at the workshop.

The leading agencies completed a case study for the CUaS Community Kitchen for the year 2011 – 2012 using the IHP Case Study Template. The Case Study Reports for Lakes District<sup>ix</sup>, Nyah West<sup>x</sup> and Sea Lake<sup>xi</sup> provided specific details on process and impact of the individual CUaS Community Kitchens.

For the year 2012 – 2013 a revised version of the CUaS Reporting Template<sup>xii</sup> was developed to monitor the ongoing process and impact of the community kitchens.

A progress report that was required as per Integrated Health Promotion reporting requirements was provided to the Department of Health in September 2011 and final summary report in September 2012.

## EVALUATION OUTCOMES

### Social Marketing and Health Information

SMPCP initiated the development of the CUaS Communication Strategy<sup>xiii</sup>, in May 2010 with its purpose to identify key contacts, community groups, media and other areas to distribute and promote Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen Project.

The strategy was a living document with additional information being added as identified and required including media releases, advertisements and other promotional opportunities. A distribution list was established to record where information packs (containing Cooking Up a Storm Folder and documents), were distributed to.

The Communication Strategy was used as a tool for evaluation as it was a record of promotion activity as identified and then undertaken including direct and indirect contact opportunities with community members and groups, broad media promotion (print, radio, web), community information sessions and other.

Promotion as identified in the Communication Strategy commenced in late December 2010 with total distribution as per following tables. Promotion of the project and information sessions were postponed in mid January due to significant floods occurring across the southern Mallee and had to be rescheduled and repeated commencing late February 2011.

The CUaS Working Group identified and developed a series of documents required for the promotion of the project and information to be supplied to the community.

#### *Social Marketing material developed;*

- Cooking Up a Storm Logo<sup>xiv</sup>
- Cooking Up a Storm Brochure<sup>xv</sup>
- Cooking Up a Storm Folder<sup>xvi</sup> containing:
  - ~ Expression of Interest<sup>xvii</sup> form
  - ~ Kitchen Assessment Tool<sup>xviii</sup> form
  - ~ Project Coordinator business card
  - ~ Cooking Up a Storm Brochure

#### *Tools developed for the Community Information Session;*

- Community Information Session Agenda<sup>xix</sup>
- CUaS Community Information Sessions Powerpoint Presentation<sup>xx</sup>
- Cooking Up a Storm Folder
- Cooking Up a Storm Information Session Questionnaire

Format for the Community Information Sessions was developed by the Project Coordinator with input from the CUaS Working Group. The aim of the information session was to:

- Inform the community of the purpose, formats and regulations of community kitchens
- What the Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen Project is offering
- How to make an application via Eol format
- Involvement and role of SMPCP, agencies, project coordinator

In the development of the Community Information Session Agenda consideration was given to the information that would be provided and not to set up an unreal expectation of what the project would provide or of the project coordinator. Enquiries that had been received from earlier promotion assisted with the agenda development and preparation for possible questions such as *food safety, facilitator role and payment*.

Case studies of other like community kitchens were sourced and provided to increase participants understanding of the variety of community kitchens and how they operate.

The power point presentation was created to further impart information and increase the understanding of a community kitchen and CUaS Community Kitchen Project.

Participants of the Community Information Sessions were asked to complete the Cooking Up a Storm Information Session Questionnaire to measure the

- Reach of promotion and most effective method,
- Interest in involvement in a community kitchen
- Skills within the community
- Further network opportunity
- Other comments

The Project Coordinator maintained progression of the development of the documents with input on structure and content from the CUaS Working Group. It took 5 months to develop the complete suite of marketing material as endorsed by the CUaS Working Group.

### Outcomes of Social Marketing and Health Information

#### Media outlets

Print and radio media was informed of activity by the way of media releases and paid advertisements on key dates prior to and relating to community information sessions.

Distribution via the following media potentially exposed the CUaS project to 11,980 residents across the three local government areas.

#### Distribution per LGA

Locality	Newspaper	Distribution Numbers	TOTAL MEDIA ITEMS
<b>Buloke</b>	<b>The Buloke Times</b>	<b>Friday 1900</b>	
Media Release		1	
General CUaS Ad		2	
Information Session Ad – Culgoa		1	
Postponement Media Release		1	
Postponement Ad		1	
Recommencement Media Release		1	
Recommencement Information Session Ad – Culgoa		2	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Buloke</b>	<b>Times Ensign</b>	<b>Friday 1200</b>	
Media Release		1	
General CUaS Ad		2	
Information Session Ad – Culgoa		1	
Postponement Media Release		1	
Postponement Ad		1	
Recommencement Media Release		1	
Recommencement Information Session Ad – Culgoa		2	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>

Locality	Newspaper	Distribution Numbers		TOTAL MEDIA ITEMS
		Tues 2450	Fri 2680	
<b>Gannawarra</b>	<b>The Northern Times</b>			
Media Release			1	
General CUaS Ad		1	1	
Information Session Ad – Lake Charm Macorna		1 1	1 1	
Postponement Media Release			1	
Postponement Ad			1	
Recommencement Media Release			1	
Recommencement Information Session Ad Lake Charm Macorna Quambatook Koondrook		1 1 1 1	1 1 1 1	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Gannawarra</b>	<b>Cohuna Farmers Weekly</b>	<b>Wednesday 1440</b>		
Media Release		1		
General CUaS Ad		2		
Information Session Ad – Macorna		2		
Postponement Media Release		1		
Postponement Ad		1		
Recommencement Media Release		1		
Recommencement Information Session Ad – Macorna		2		
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>10</b>

Locality	Newspaper	Distribution Numbers			TOTAL MEDIA ITEMS
		Mon 5000	Wed 4500	Fri 6200	
<b>Swan Hill</b>	<b>The Guardian</b>				
Media Release				1	
General CUaS Ad		1		1	
Information Session Ad – Nyah West Lake Boga		1 1		1 1	
Postponement Media Release				1	
Postponement Ad				1	
Recommencement Media Release				1	
Recommencement Information Session Ad see		2		2	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>60</b>
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<b>RADIO</b>	<b>Interview occurred</b>
ABC Radio (emailed 12/1/11) – Interview postponed due to floods Interviewed on 1/3/11 Emailed 9/3/11 for further interview	X
Mix FM (emailed 12/1/11) – Coverage postponed due to floods Re-emailed 2/3/11 to restart 3/3/11/ Smart FM	X
3SH (phone call 7/3/11) – Interview for 8/3/11 morning news	X

## Other

Promotion via other outlets

LGA	Community Newsletter	School Newsletter	Radio	Website	TOTAL
Swan Hill	2	1	3	1	6
Gannawarra	6	4	3	1	14
Buloke	1	1	3		4
Community Kitchen Website				2 (one as an update)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>26</b>

## Distribution of Cooking Up a Storm Folder and documents

Cooking Up a Storm Folder containing an introductory letter, Expression of Interest form, Kitchen Assessment Tool form, Cooking Up a Storm Brochure, Project Coordinator business card was distributed to identified community members, community groups, councils, information centres, neighbourhood houses, local post offices and general stores in eligible communities across per local government area.

LGA	Brochures	Folders	Flyers	TOTAL
Swan Hill	500	19	14	533
Gannawarra	280	48	25	353
Buloke	160	12	7	179
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1065</b>

## Community Information Sessions in Each LGA

The CUaS Working Group initially determined five locations for the Community Information sessions with consideration for eligibility and central and accessible to surrounding towns. Northern and southern districts for each local government area were chosen - Nyah/Nyah West and Lake Boga in the Swan Hill Rural City, Lake Charm and Macorna in the Gannawarra Shire and Culgoa in Buloke Shire.

Two additional Community Information Sessions were provided in the Gannawarra Shire at Quambatook and Koondrook once the project recommenced. This decision was made in light of the significant impacts of flooding on these communities and surrounds, the challenge they would face in attending an alternative location and that the project could be of benefit to the community in their recovery.

The Community information sessions were hosted by the CUaS Project Coordinator and a representative from the CUaS Working Group from the aligning government agency. The attendance of this representative was extremely valuable as the Project Coordinator reflects;

*“Often three working group representatives were “local” to the participants, either through health events or an activity which had been carried out in their communities, or because the representatives actually lived in the community and this was also very beneficial because participants could relate to, and feel comfortable with, the working group members.”*

## Gannawarra LGA - 4 Information sessions

Community	Number of attendees & region	Informed of information session by:
Lake Charm	3 attendees 2 from Lake Charm 1 from Kangaroo Lake	Newspaper Email
Macorna	4 attendees 1 Kerang Others did not indicate	Networks
Quambatook	6 attendees 5 from Quambatook 1 from Kerang	Poster/flyer and networks
Koondrook	7 attendees 6 from Koondrook 1 from Murrabit	Networks

Swan Hill LGA (southern Mallee region) - 2 Information sessions

Community	Number of attendees & region	Informed of information session by:
Lake Boga	1 attendee	Direct contact
Nyah/Nyah West	9 attendees 7 from Nyah West 1 from Woorinen 1 from Swan Hill	Networks Email Newspaper

Buloke LGA - 1 Information session

Community	Number of attendees & region	Informed of information session by:
Culgoa	6 attendees All from Culgoa	Newspaper Poster and flyer

A total of thirty six people attended the Community Information Sessions which was below the desired number. All communities had been disrupted by the flood events and many people continued to be involved in reparation efforts. The disruption in promotion and the Community Kitchen concept being unfamiliar may also have been an influence in the low number of attendees and the vast area the project was trying to connect with. The Project Coordinator observed,

*“When doing follow up phone calls, there seemed to be a misconception for some, that those who did not live in the towns where the information sessions were held, felt that they were unable to apply, or that kitchens were going to be set up in those towns only, even if the aim of the advertisements and media releases was to promote otherwise.”*

*“Timing of the information sessions may have been a little too soon for some people at this stage, as they are still coping with the devastation of the floods in their area, and not ready to take on something new, however beneficial it may be for their community. Some communities are just exhausted at the moment.”*

Thirty five questionnaires were completed with the majority of questions having a response.

Thirty six women and four men attended the Community Information Sessions with majority of attendees from the community where the information session was held.

Thirty four responses were received to the question ‘How did you find out about this information session’, twelve people reported they had been informed by more than one method. Networks, family and friends received fifteen responses, newspaper, poster and Cooking Up a Storm Brochure ten responses each and email seven responses. Promotion by networks, family and friends and Cooking Up a Storm Brochure were most common of multiple responses, this occurred significantly in the community of Quambatook. The newspaper and one other medium was indicated as information method in particular for Culgoa.

Twenty three people indicated they would like to be a participant in a community kitchen and three interested in the Community Kitchen Facilitator role. Twenty one people would refer other individuals to the project. With the exception of Macorna and Lake Boga, all other communities had at least one person who would volunteer to set up and develop a community kitchen in their local area.

All communities had people with skills that would be beneficial in establishing and running a community kitchen. Food safety qualifications were held by more than one person per community with the exception of Quambatook and Macorna. First aid qualifications were available most communities by usually two people with the exception of Culgoa who did not have any.

Budgeting skills and nutrition knowledge were indicated for all communities except Macorna and Culgoa. Group facilitation skills were available for communities of Lake Charm, Nyah/Nyah West and Koondrook. Twelve additional comments were provided with eight saying the “Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen Project was a great idea and hoped the community would be involved”.

**2011 - 2013** No further evaluation was undertaken for Social Marketing and Health Information.

### **Summary of Reach**

The target of sixty community members was not achieved even with information being distributed having the possibility of reaching over 11000 people. The most effective means of informing and engaging people has been through networks and distribution of Cooking Up a Storm brochures.

Community readiness is important to gaining interest in possible community projects and while the floods were outside the control of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project it is reasonable to assess this did affect interest and capacity of communities to consider this project.

### **Summary of Increased Knowledge**

The knowledge of community kitchen concept has increased for the thirty six people who attended the Community Information sessions. Twenty four percent of attendees indicated their knowledge had been increased by understanding the initiative and the benefits for a community such as social inclusion.

Utilising feedback forms is a good method to gather information of skills and knowledge in a community that may be able to be tapped into for community projects. This method provides organisations with an understanding of local assets.

Personal skills identified in communities included;

- Food safety qualifications
- First aid
- Budgeting
- Knowledge of nutrition
- Group facilitation



## Community Action

In the funding application it was stated 'interested communities will be assisted in completing an Expression of Interest and this will ensure each community can provide evidence of how it will be built into current and future community activities, build on existing community initiatives and how it will be sustained within their community'.

The CUaS Working Group developed two tools Expression of Interest form and Kitchen Assessment Tool form which was required to be completed and submitted for consideration by the Selection Panel.

The Expression of Interest form provided a brief outline of Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen Project, the Community Kitchen concept, the role of the project Coordinator and communities who were ineligible to apply. Seven questions were asked and if the venue or organisation had public liability insurance.

The Kitchen Assessment Tool was designed to assist in determining the suitability of a kitchen for use as a community kitchen.

The Expression of Interest form and Kitchen Assessment Tool was included in Cooking Up a Storm folders and distributed across the three local government areas as per the distribution list.

At Community Information Sessions the Project Coordinator explained the process for submitting an expression of interest, who could support completing an application and when the application was due.

The Cooking Up a Storm Folder was provided to attendees with the documents that were required to be completed.

Four Expressions of Interest were received; two from Gannawarra Shire, one from Buloke Shire and one from Swan Hill Rural City. Two of the expressions of interest required assistance with answering the questions.

*The Project Coordinator observed;*

*Two of the four EoI forms were submitted by older residents, who needed assistance with answering the questions. When I went through the forms with them, and gave them some guidance and interpretation, it became clear to me that they simply did not understand the language being used in the questions.*

*It is very important to make follow up phone calls after the information sessions, as the personal approach with further clarification and encouragement certainly helped people understand more about what the community kitchen concept is all about, and therefore more inclined to put in an EoI.*

The Selection Panel was established with a representative from three SMPCP member agencies who were aware of the project but had not been directly involved and the SMPCP Executive Officer.

The Selection Panel was provided with the Community Kitchen Selection Process<sup>xxi</sup> document developed by the CUaS Working Group; its purpose was to guide the CUaS Selection Panel with the selection process for the three CUaS Community Kitchens. Information provided included background of the project, project development, communities who were eligible to apply and how the project had been promoted. The process the CUaS Selection Panel was to use and an assessment tool was supplied.

The Selection Panel completed their task in May 2011 and provided recommendations on what they considered the three successful communities would need in support to establish the community kitchen and participate in ongoing action required by the SMPCP Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee in progressing the objective; *To Establish three Community Kitchens*. These considerations contributed to further planning by the CUaS Working Group.

The community who was not successful were referred to another program within the Gannawarra Shire who was able to provide support and develop a program which better suited the interest and capacity of the community.

## **Cooking Up a Storm Stage 2 2011 - 2012**

Swan Hill District Health, Northern District Community Health Service and Sea Lake Neighbourhood House approached initialising the establishment of a community kitchen in a range of ways including;

- Hosting meetings and information sessions
- Working with the person or people who had submitted the expression of interest
- Promoting via a range of methods – flyer, poster, newspaper, in local businesses, local newsletters and networks, door knock, letter box drop, face to face

All CUaS Community Kitchen communities hosted a community meeting supported by the lead agency with the aim to promote and discuss establishing a community kitchen that would be developed to be appropriate to the participants and driven by the community.

Ongoing promotion occurred to generate interest in the local community by;

- Displaying posters in local shops
- Distributing flyers
- Articles in local media and school newsletters

In one community a door knock occurred as other methods had resulted in very low numbers responding and showing interest.

One of the leading agencies expressed there is a need to be mindful and realistic when community members approach organisations regarding community projects that do have some funding supports. While community members may believe a project would be very good for a community further discussion and agreement on how and who will support and participate in such projects needs to be clarified so organisations are not left or expected to do all the work. In this case the community members who asked for the expression of interest to be submitted did not take any part in the project.

While there were a significant number of methods to inform and engage people of the CUaS Community Kitchens in the communities and surrounds of Lakes District, Nyah West and Sea Lake a total of 44 people registered with a CUaS Community Kitchen; this was less than the expected reach of 60. All three sites did commence a CUaS Community Kitchen during the twelve month period directed by the participants but with support from the lead agencies.

Evaluation tools showed the majority of the registrations and participants were women with them representing 32 registrations while 12 men registered. Registrations have been recorded using the Community Kitchen Participant Registration Form from the *Community Kitchen 'How To' Manual* Page 65.

Over the next twelve months (2011 – 12) the total average attendance across all three community kitchens was 29 people.

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The **Sea Lake** Community Kitchen established a weekly program which ran each term for youth aged from 7 to 14. Students attended after school usually walking or driving to the venue and then being taken home by the community bus. This group also had the highest average attendance being 13.

As a group they would sit down and discuss what they were going to cook with each meal having roughly the same format – an entree, a main and a dessert. Sometimes they would include a drink such as a milkshake. Often there would be a theme to the night such as an Asian night or near Christmas a Christmas feast and so forth. Other time they would experiment with things such as from popular TV shows such as Master Chef.

Once the meals were decided, they would then determine how much of each ingredient was required to feed everyone and what ingredients they already had on hand. From this they would then work out a budget to see if they could afford the meal. Ingredients lists were given to people and then they would get on the bus and travel to the local supermarket. Together they would collect all their ingredients and then pay for them at the counter.

They would then return to the kitchen where each week someone different would take a turn at being in charge and directing the group to what their role and responsibility was for the night. Once the leader had established this, everyone would set to work cooking their meal.

Whenever someone was unsure about what they were doing or if they needed assistance, they felt comfortable asking someone else in the group or the facilitator. They preferred to eat their meal as a group and continue to socialise and critique their cooking efforts and presentation. However they also loved to take a sample home to show off to their parents and siblings what they had achieved.

**Lakes District** group were adults ranging from the age of 40 to 70 years who were either employed or retired. This group met once a month to cook with an average attendance of 8. They relied on travelling by car due to the rural environment they are situated in and no public transport.

CUaS in the Lakes District is on a Monday evening starting at 6.00pm. All members of the community are welcome to attend with a willingness to participate and a positive attitude being the only thing anyone needs to bring along. Each month a menu is selected from the dietitian approved cook books from the previous month. Shopping is allocated to one or two different members each session and money reimbursed each month. Money and registrations are kept in the CUaS shopping trolley and managed by several people in the group depending on who is available.

Care is taken to ensure all members' skills and interests are accommodated. All members have something to contribute in the preparation of the meal and the discussions that occur during this time. Once the meal is cooked then all members sit down at the dining room table and the meal is enjoyed together.

Afterwards any leftovers are offered to the group to take home and a new menu is decided on for the next session.

**Nyah West** group had participants from the age of 12 to 88 years, 3 participants were from a CALD background and the average attendance was 8. There were a high number of people registered who were unemployed and this group did have people from neighbouring communities. Most people drove to the community kitchen which initially was a weekly meeting, guided and facilitated by SHDH staff which seemed to work really well.

There were no volunteers to facilitate the program, resulting in SHDH being involved for longer than expected which allowed the kitchen to become more sustaining and confident. Once handed over to the community, it was decided that once every 2 weeks was often enough as they all participated in other activities.

The participants were taking the recipes home and cooking the same meals for their families, finding that their partners were happy with the food being cooked and children were more inclined to eat vegetables as they were 'hidden'.

There have also been donations from local primary producers of olive oil, eggs and carrots, and am sure this generosity of the community will continue.

The participants in CUaS have described how the program is very important to them and they would like to see it continue, very grateful for the experience and the investment into their community. They have found that it has allowed them to make new friends, be more social and gain confidence when cooking as well as teach others.

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Fluctuation in the number of people participating in the CUaS Community Kitchens occurred mostly in the adult groups and was mostly due to personal circumstance, seasonal events such as harvest which also had some impact on community kitchens commencing or the number of people attending. Maintaining interest and consistent numbers is an ongoing challenge in the adult group and strategies to engage others need to continue to be implemented.

A range of means have been used to continue communication for community kitchen participants and further promotion including email, telephone, flyers, word of mouth and in the youth community kitchen Facebook was utilised adding photos and comments from the sessions.

All the kitchen groups had a “break” over the Christmas period and recommenced later in January or early in February.

A range of health conditions for some participants were reported mostly from the groups that had adults; these conditions included Type 2 diabetes, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, hypertension, high blood pressure and an allergy to raw egg was reported in the youth group.

## **2012 – 2013**

### **Sea Lake**

In the Sea Lake community the Coordinator for the Neighbourhood House was on maternity leave which removed the key leader for this Youth CUaS Community Kitchen. The interim Coordinator explored options to engage community members to assist facilitate and support the ongoing Youth CUaS Community Kitchen but was not successful even though there was still a strong desire for this youth activity to continue. The interim Coordinator felt that as the activity was hosted in the Neighbourhood House setting this established the expectation that staff were responsible for providing and coordinating programs.

### **Lakes District**

During 2012 – 2013 Lakes District has maintained the CUaS Community Kitchen with an increase of four registrations three of which are men and one women.

Ongoing promotion using email, SMS text and advertising in the local newsletter are reported as all having a good response. Email is used to advise participants of details of the next CUaS session and SMS text is used close to the date to support the ‘Head Chef’ is aware of the number of participants. Communication and an open invitation to all community members who have registered is maintained which allows for participation as suitable to the individual and accommodating work, holidays and family commitments.

The format of Lakes District CUaS Community Kitchen has remained consistent continuing to meet the same night and time once a month which prevents confusion and enables those that could not be contacted throughout the month to know when the group is meeting. The group chooses the menu and recipes which can be prepared and cooked in an hour which they can enjoy together. The group has chosen to select a healthy recipe for main and less healthy dessert which reported as is more appealing to the participants palate.

To gradually move the group to a position of self sustaining a role of Head Chef has been developed. There has been reluctance from all participants to take on the role of facilitator with one of the key concerns being the responsibility for handling the money. However tasks are shared and introducing ‘Head Chef’ has assisted with the majority of participants taking a turn as the lead of the session.

During the year the group also agreed to increase the session cost from \$5 to \$7 per person to meet the cost of what they chose to cook.

The group continue to make decisions usually doing this during the time they sit and share the meal they have prepared. Discussions with the group have included the selection of recipes and ongoing group activities such as guest speakers or other cooking experience like a pizza oven night which they did coordinate.

### **Nyah West**

From June 2012 – Dec 2012 there were only 3 sessions ran with 2-4 participants attending. All were organised and facilitated by SHDH. The present participants were not willing and did not want to take on a leadership role.

It was felt that the location of the community kitchen may have been a barrier for people attending (as Jacaranda is on the very outskirts of town) so contact was made with the CFA to see if Cooking Up a Storm could relocate and use their new kitchen facilities. (The CFA had previously been identified as a possible venue but at the time was not suitable due to damage to the kitchen from a mouse plague). Unfortunately there was some angst with this proposal from a small portion of CFA ranks, a letter of thanks was written to the CFA for

allowing the CUaS program to be run from the facility but this caused more conflict, particularly around legal liabilities. Eventually this matter was sorted out and it was decided that during mid January a letter to all local organisations/businesses/groups/registered members would be sent out to inform them of the move and recommencement of the program.

During January the leading worker from SHDH resigned and a new worker was appointed to commence in February 2013 so the letter was withheld as the new worker completed other activities and became familiar with the position of the Nyah West CUaS Community Kitchen. The worker revisited the letter and discussed with the person who submitted the original expression of interest and the Rural Outreach Program Advisory Committee regarding the best way to promote the community kitchen and re-establish it.

Through the consultation it was recommended to still send out the letters and include a set date to recommence, invite people to write, email, call in with what days and times best suited them. It was also suggested to attend the Nyah West Action Group, which was undertaken. This group too supported the letter idea but did not have any further direction of where to take it. The letters were sent to 44 organisations/businesses/groups and registered members on 26<sup>th</sup> Feb with feedback due in 28<sup>th</sup> March.

This action resulted in only 1 letter being received, from the Nyah West pre-school, indicating that they would be interested in 2014 once they have their new facility.

With the lack of feedback it was decided that Cooking Up a Storm in Nyah West would cease with a 'finale' cook up or picnic supplied by a new local cafe funded by the remainder of the kitty money. All registered members were to be invited.

### **Summary of Reach**

#### **2009-2011**

The target of six communities submitting an expression of interest was not achieved. Three communities from the target area have been selected and will be supported to establish a community kitchen. Further planning and action is required to achieve this outcome.

#### **2012 - 2013**

Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchens have been established in Buloke, Gannawarra and Swan Hill local government areas and are continuing to operate which reaches the objective of the project.

The Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen in Sea Lake for youth has been incorporated as a program to be run each term by the Neighbourhood House. Previous participants are keen to continue with the program and would like to expand to include a garden where some ingredients could be grown. With the youth now confident with cooking skills and buying ingredients the level of supervision required is minimal.

Lakes District is continuing with support being maintained by Northern District Community Health Service. As the group only met once a month they are still developing steps that will support independent sustainability. Throughout the project sustainability has been discussed with the group and participants have gradually taken on or shared roles for their monthly cooking sessions.

Nyah West is continuing independently but has found they need to come up with strategies to engage more interest and new members in the group. They are continuing to look to Swan Hill District Health for ongoing support in strengthening the group.

#### **2012 - 2013**

With what appeared to be a reasonable foundation to strengthen and maintain CUaS Community Kitchens in each LGA it is evident that changing factors from the support foundation can quickly change a situation when a program is in relative infancy and there is a reliance on an organisation.

Lakes District has had consistency in the support provided by the lead agency and with the established communication processes; it would appear this is a good support base for establishing a community kitchen. This group has seen an increase in the number of men participating and are working collaboratively in coordination and decision making processes. While there is reluctance for total ownership steps are being implemented by the group that will support independence and sustainability.

Nyah West and Sea Lake have had changes in staff and while the Sea Lake community kitchen worked well in the previous year the reliance on the organisation became a barrier to the program continuing. The engagement strategies used to boost the Nyah West group were not successful even with the appeal of a more central location.

## Settings and Supportive Environments

An invitation was extended to over twelve SMPCP Members and Associate Members to participate in the Cooking Up a Storm Working Group. As time went on participation in Working Group meetings came down to a core group of leading agencies. There was a range of knowledge within the Working Group including the Project Coordinator who worked in the area of Community Development, Health and Health Promotion, Environmental Health and Community Planning.

Project Coordinator reflection;

“Initially I had little background knowledge on what community kitchens were, and only limited knowledge on Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership, so although my community networking skills were good, I had to read and learn on both of these fronts.”

“The working group meetings and working group members were always very helpful throughout the project. Regular working group meetings meant that members were always kept updated on the progress of the project, however these meetings were often not well attended by a consistent number of working group members. This did not deter from the assistance given to me by those who did attend, which was very supportive and beneficial.”

“As the project progressed my knowledge base grew and I gained confidence in the role. However, I still relied on the experience and knowledge of the working group members.”

Cooking Up a Storm Working Group Member reflection;

“I believe the Committee worked well, particularly having the Project Worker who could follow up on suggestions made. The committee seemed to work well with representatives from across the different LGA's.”

“It is positive the ability of different shires to come together to discuss one project even though each kitchen would be different in each area.”

A range of strategies were used to increase the knowledge of the CUaS Working Group in how Community Kitchens operate, how CUaS should be promoted to the community and to plan for supporting communities in establishing sustainable community kitchens. The Community Kitchen Website and the Community Kitchen Manual were a valuable resource for the Project Coordinator and the Working Group. Case studies of other Community Kitchens were sourced via the website and proved to be most valuable for community members in order to grasp the community kitchen concept. The Community Kitchen Manual covered many topics and had tools for anyone wanting to start and maintain a community kitchen.

Project Coordinator reflection;

“I came into the position therefore not knowing a lot on the process involved in setting up a community kitchen, however found the community kitchen website to be a very useful resource and therefore very informative.”

At times others were sort to participate in CUaS Working Group meetings in order for the members to gain a better understanding of what should be considered in presenting the Community Kitchen model to community and what support will the successful communities need.

Project Coordinator reflection;

“This became more evident when talking to the Cook-in Project team who work out of East Wimmera Health. The background for this community kitchen project had not been researched thoroughly, or recorded adequately, which has meant that they now almost have to start over with the process of maintaining the sustainability of their kitchens.”

### **Cooking Up a Storm Stage 2 2011 - 2012**

Evaluation methods of the CUaS Community Kitchens have indicated community kitchens are an effective environment for increasing knowledge of food and in particular nutritious food.

The CUaS Community Kitchens have increased the knowledge for the majority of all participants in all or some of the following areas;

- ~ Cooking
- ~ Grocery shopping
- ~ Budgeting for meals
- ~ Meals being prepared at home
- ~ Nutritious food

The community kitchen format appears to have worked very well for the Sea Lake Youth group in providing them with the opportunity to undertake tasks that are usually done by an adult in the family. 100% of the group reported an increase in the like for cooking and grocery shopping. One of the girls participating in the class refused to eat anything that she considered junk food, her knowledge has expanded on what she could include in her diet.

The adults reported they had some knowledge in most areas to start with but the format has contributed to improving this knowledge. The Nyah West group reported the ability to budget for food has improved from 17% indicating they were good to 46%. The Nyah West group also reported a 12% increase in meals being prepared at home from 50% to 62%.

The Lakes District group has reported an expansion of knowledge regarding the use of different vegetables and participants reported they were buying new ingredients to cook the recipes at home.

The community kitchen setting is strongly showing that participants are gaining much in the area of social connection and inclusion. New friendships have been formed and the setting has provided the opportunity to broadening the circle of friends when in other social settings. The CUaS Community Kitchen setting has reduced some barriers to social interaction that may be found in settings where there are more people and groups already established.

In the Sea Lake group a new female to the region found it helped them to meet others that normally they wouldn't have associated with due to age, social and schooling differences.

The Nyah West group has reported an increase in volunteering or being involved in community activities from 34% to 69% and from the Lakes District one of their participants has become involved in the Neighbourhood House and taken on the role of treasurer.

The Lakes District group has seen the men involved in the kitchen taking on key tasks for the group and with leadership roles being taken on. This has evolved as confidence has been built up. Some participants have expanded their social interests by becoming involved with other community groups.

**2012 – 2013:** *This was not evaluated during this period*

### **Summary of Increased Knowledge**

#### **2009 - 2011**

The knowledge of the Community Kitchen Working Group members has been increased through working in a partnership and using other resources such as websites, guide books and other working within the field.

Cooking Up a Storm Working Group member reflection;

“Yes, due to the preliminary work done by the working group, I think as far as we know we have enough information to establish a kitchen.”

#### **2011 – 2012**

##### **Participants**

The CUaS Community Kitchens do provide a setting for increasing knowledge in activities relating to nutrition. This environment covers a range of skill areas that are supportive of healthier lifestyles including cooking, budgeting and shopping.



Increased knowledge has occurred for both the youth and the adults who have participated demonstrating it is an adaptable setting for a range of ages.

For youth the skill and knowledge gain regarding activities that will support good nutrition is higher than that of adults. The opportunity for youth to make decisions regarding recipe choices, the experience of purchasing food and preparation and cooking is an area that many have no to limited experience prior to participation in a community kitchen.

In one of the community kitchens the settings is showing the environment is appealing to men and their knowledge regarding aspects of food has increased – they have not had the primary role of food preparation in the household.

The community kitchen setting has shown that it is an environment that knowledge can be gained that increase confidence to be more socially involved and inclusive of others. Gaining a greater understanding of others and personal situations appears to have broken down barriers and provided an opportunity for interaction with others who are not of a same socio economic position. The community kitchen setting has expanded the confidence for some people to participate more broadly in the community by increasing and broadening friendships.

### **CUaS Working Group members**

For the CUaS Working Group members the CUaS Community Kitchen project has demonstrated that community kitchens are a supportive environment where the knowledge of food and nutrition can be increased in a relaxed atmosphere and be ongoing.

There are other benefits that can be gained from a community kitchen, in particular social participation and inclusion which can reduce barriers in communities.

Community kitchens allow for a range of topics that support healthy lifestyles to be discussed and practiced without the feeling of 'being told' or 'preached' too by health professionals.

## Partnership

From February 2010 to April 2011 there were 13 CUaS Working Group meetings held. Of these meetings Swan Hill District Health attended 11 (84.6%), Northern District Community Health Service attended 10 (76.9%) and East Wimmera Health Service attended 7 (53.8%). The attendance of only 7 meetings from EWHS was due to staff members being on leave.

Other agencies also attended meetings throughout 2010 – 2011 (as per table below). Gannawarra Shire Council attended 11 (84.6%) meetings which is represented by the CUaS Project Coordinator who is auspiced by Gannawarra Shire Council and employed as a staff member.

Agency	No. of meetings attended (out of 13 meetings)
Bendigo Health	1
Buloke Shire Council	1
East Wimmera Health Service	7
Gannawarra Shire Council <i>Project Coordinator</i>	11
Kerang District Health	3
Northern District Community Health Service	10
Swan Hill District Health	11
Swan Hill Rural City Council	3

### **Cooking Up a Storm Stage 2 2011 - 2012**

With the implementation of CUaS Stage 2 a review of the CUaS Working Group was undertaken and re-established with the three LGA lead organisations of Mallee Track Health and Community Service – Sea Lake Neighbourhood House, Northern District Community Health Service, Swan Hill District Health. East Wimmera Health Service were also included in the CUaS Working Group to maintain a link with the Cook In Project and SMPCP staff to support the catchment wide activity, administration and evaluation processes.

Steps taken to re-establish the group included updating the CUaS Working Group Terms of Reference and develop a Communication Strategy to reflect the role of the group which was to;

- Ensure progression of the implementation and evaluation of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project that is a part of the SMPCP 2009-2012 Strategic & Operational Plans.
- Oversee CUaS Community Kitchen Project catchment wide activity and will work with and support lead agencies engaged in local level activity.
- Link to the Promoting healthy Lifestyle Committee

During 2011 – 2012 there were five meeting held with the three lead agencies participating in 70% of the working group meetings. East Wimmera Health Service continued to communicate and provide information on progress of the Cook In Project but was not as engaged in the working group meetings.

The working group meetings were seen as valuable providing the opportunity to share information, discuss and find solutions to problems and hear how other community kitchens were working.

A key activity of the CUaS Working Group was the development and coordination of the CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop which was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2012 in Swan Hill. Swan Hill District Health, Northern District Community Health Service and SMPCP staff were the main organisers of the workshop.

There were challenges for the working group which included change of staff, distance of the catchment and limited time for staff who work part time. There were processes in place to support the partnership which included the use of videoconferencing, a meeting schedule set for the year and rotating meeting sites across the catchment.

The relationship between CUaS lead agencies was friendly and at times communication between sites did occur.

## **2012 – 2013**

The lead agencies decided they wanted to continue to meet and discuss CUaS Community Kitchens for the next twelve months as they felt the discussion did provide the opportunity to discuss strategies they were using to engage others in the community kitchens and challenges they came across.

The CUaS Working Group also agreed to continue with limited evaluation components to contribute further information to the CUaS Community Kitchen project report.

During the year Mallee Track Health and Community Services – Sea Lake Neighbourhood House and Swan Hill District Health had a change in staff. The CUaS Working Group meeting did allow the new staff to gain an understanding of the background to the CUaS Community Kitchen Project, discuss engagement strategies and share the position of each site.

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In reviewing CUaS project documents from the commencement of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project it shows there has been a considerable shift from who was originally involved in the project funding application and expected as partner agencies.

From the first meeting to form the CUaS Working Group to the eventual position of the working group and CUaS Community Kitchens it tends to highlight the importance of all involved in initial stages having a clear and agreed vision, capacity to commit and being realistic regarding the time and energy that is needed in developing a project from the application, implementation, monitoring processes and to a sustainable position.

It would appear change in staff has had quite an impact diluting the understanding of the partnership and the role and ownership in the project. Throughout there have been documents such as Terms of Reference to guide the partnership but it is questionable if their purpose is utilised as well as they could be or shared with new staff.

## **Summary of Partnerships**

### **2009 - 2011**

Swan Hill District Health, Gannawarra Shire Council and Northern District Community Health Service have been the main leaders of the CUaS Working Group and project participating in more than 70% of meetings in which information was shared and they collaborated to progress the project.

East Wimmera Health Service had limited capacity for a period of time which did impact on their participation.

### **2011 – 2013**

The CUaS Working Group has been an important driver of the catchment wide project with the format providing peer support and solution generation. The working group format appears to have been valuable for new staff in providing a history of the project and activity that has been undertaken to progress the project.

Over the life of the project there has been a variance in the capacity of involved agencies to undertake the required activity in continuing to drive the CUaS project to reach sustainable positions.

When there is a change in staff using hand over processes to support new staff to have a clear understanding of a formed partnership would support continuity and maintain strength to progress activity.

Being selective of who is driving a project initially rather than putting out a blanket invitation would more likely keep the target in sight and move a project forward more efficiently. Engaging others when there is a clear purpose would value add to the partnership and the organisation would understand their role and value of involvement.

The CUaS Community Kitchen partnership project has been a piece of work across the catchment that has evolved allowing for insight in to how future activity can work across the catchment while being delivered and managed at the local level.

## Workforce Development

### 2009 - 2011

Consideration for what information should be imparted in a Community Kitchen Facilitator training was discussed within CUaS Working Group meetings and an outline of three sessions developed. Two Community Kitchen Facilitators who are funded to undertake their work attended CUaS Working Group meetings. They spoke of their role and the enablers and barriers in carrying out their work. One expressed that it would be a great benefit to have others in similar positions to speak with and discuss the challenges encountered. This person is very keen to be able to participate in Facilitator training or other networks that may evolve from the CUaS Project.

The CUaS Working Group was made aware the role of facilitator required a level of skill and knowledge and considerable support. The CUaS working group viewed that this could be provided by offering training to enhance skills and inform of areas where additional support could come such as networks and agencies.

Preparation for a first training session was undertaken by the Project Coordinator and one CUaS Working Group member. Possible content, time, location and venue was in draft for further consideration by the CUaS Working Group.

Guide to the content was sourced from the Community Kitchen Manual and Website and discussion with other Community Kitchen Facilitators. Key information regarding the CUaS Community Kitchen Project including catchment wide activity and evaluation recording and reporting requirements was included.

A Facilitator Kit was compiled and supplied to each Community Kitchen which included the following;

- Maroon Trolley with Cooking Up a Storm embroidered on the flap
- Green Apron with Cooking Up a Storm embroidered on the bib
- Blue Folder to hold required community kitchen forms for facilitator and participants
- Community Kitchen manual, recipe book, budgeting book and DVD

The Community Kitchen Facilitator Kit was created to assist with the development of the kitchen in planning and establishing the kitchen, commencing the kitchen, sustainability and evaluation.

Each community kitchen and facilitator were to have the same resources and information and be provided with documents that would be required to be completed for evaluation purposes that would ultimately build the evidence for impact evaluation.

Evaluation tools have mostly been sourced from the Community Kitchen Manual and their use will be discussed within Facilitator Training sessions.

### ***Cooking Up a Storm Stage 2***

#### **2011 – 2012**

Once the CUaS Community Kitchens commenced it became evident participants of the kitchens were not willing to put their hand up as the designated Community Kitchen Facilitator. With this in mind the CUaS Working Group agreed the workshop should be offered to all participants of community kitchens and information delivered at the workshop not as targeted to facilitation roles and responsibilities. The title of the workshop was changed from *Community Kitchen Facilitator Training* to *CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop*. Members of the CUaS community kitchens had indicated interest in attending a CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop.

It should be noted that in the community kitchens people have emerged as leaders but have been reluctant to be labelled as the facilitator of the group.

As the direction for the CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop changed evaluation tools and processes that had been identified became the total responsibility of the lead agencies where it was assumed the kitchen facilitator would undertake some of the roles such as recording a summary of the cooking session.

To assist with evaluation reporting a CUaS Reporting Template was developed noting tools and timeframe for activity, this was approved by the CUaS Working Group but there was not an in depth discussion on how each

tool should be used therefore the methods of reporting were in a range of formats such as the use of numbers, percentages and varying level of detail.

### **CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop**

The CUaS Working Group had originally planned to hold the workshop on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2012 but in hindsight this was too early in the year as most of the community kitchens had only recently recommenced, after having a break over the Christmas and school holiday period.

The 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2012, 9.30AM until 3PM was agreed as suitable by all members of the CUaS Working Group. Activity was undertaken to develop an appropriate agenda, engage others to present, share roles between CUaS Working Group members and promote the CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop. It was noted that as the Sea Lake Community Kitchen Group was for youth, they would not be able to attend due to school, although there was interest from the Sea Lake Mens Shed who were aiming to commence a kitchen and it was viewed this would be valuable for them to hear how the other kitchens have progressed.

The CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop was open to all participants of CUaS Community Kitchens and Cook In Community Kitchens who are supported by East Wimmera Health Service. Throughout the life of CUaS Community Kitchen Project a link has been maintained to the Cook In project with the view some activity could be shared such as information, training and evaluation and as a participant of the CUaS Working Group.

The CUaS Working Group agreed the workshop was to be interactive and provide plenty of opportunity for participants to share their knowledge and bring forward what had been occurring in their kitchen – the positives and the challenges.

The aim of the workshop was to:

- Provide information that will help your Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen and Cook In Community Kitchen
- Support your kitchen so it is enjoyable for all
- Be an opportunity to ask questions and share your solutions
- Meet others involved in Community Kitchens

The Community Kitchen Workshop was promoted to each community kitchen by the supporting agency and with the distribution of the CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop Flyer<sup>xxii</sup> which included the workshop aims, program and local contact person.

All CUaS Working Group members had an agenda item to facilitate and two guest speakers were engaged;

- Ingrid Watson, Environmental Health Officer Swan Hill Rural City Council who addressed the topic of *Food Safety*
- Stephanie Acosta, Dietitian, Swan Hill District Health who presented on *Nutrition and Access to Food*,

Other presentations were on Participating in a Community Group and Kitchen Safety.

A *Participant Feedback Form* was developed to capture if the participants level of knowledge increased from attending the workshop. The form asked for the participant to indicate their level of knowledge regarding the particular topic prior to attending the workshop and if their knowledge had been increased. The feedback form also asked; *How would you be able to include this information into your Cooking Up a Storm Session.*

### **Outcomes of the Community Kitchen Workshop**

Five participants from two community kitchens, (Nyah/Nyah West and Lake Charm) attended the workshop. The number of participants was less than expected but it was agreed the workshop should progress. Feedback from the other communities invited indicated the day clashed with other events or there wasn't any interest.

Two of the CUaS Working Group members withdrew from the workshop, one at late notice, leaving other members to cover or host their agenda item. Reasons for withdrawal were due to another event scheduled and being busy with project.

The workshop commenced at 9.30AM and was complete by 2.30PM with time allowed for morning tea, lunch and a five minute break before the last session. This length of time was suitable and would be recommended as appropriate if another workshop was held.

Throughout the workshop information was collected on a white board for further discussion and/or to be provided post workshop.

### **Outcomes of workshop**

Participants readily shared their knowledge and experiences, asked questions, identified areas for improvement within their kitchen and came up with strategies that they felt would be helpful within their community kitchen environment.

Participants were asked to rate their knowledge of each topic before each presentation then again after they heard the presentation. A rating scale 0 = No knowledge at all, 2 = Some knowledge and 5 = A great deal of knowledge was used to measure change.

Evaluation of the *Participant Feedback Form* indicates for all topics an increase in knowledge has been gained.

Participants were also asked to *consider what you have learned and how you could take that back to your community kitchen* and write down how they would do this.

Evaluation of the *Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen Workshop* indicates the workshop was well received by the participants and that they have increased their knowledge in regards to the topics that were presented which included;

- Food safety
- Nutrition and access to food
- Participating in a community group
- Kitchen safety

All participants said the day was beneficial to them, that they enjoyed meeting others and they were provided with information that would be helpful in their community kitchen.

During the agenda item *Participating in a Community Group* the participants discussed and shared their thoughts on engagement strategies identifying who could be engaged and how this could occur. Their suggestions included approaching seasonal workers, new people to town, people living on their own and people with disabilities. While some of the methods of how this might occur were the same as previous approaches other methods included;

- Go to where the people are – eg. visit places of accommodation Caravan park,
- Consider changing time of day you may be running your community kitchen to meet needs of other people
- Consider including people with challenges in other ways than having to come to the community kitchen such as;
  - May provide recipes
  - Research from home
  - Invite to come just for the meal
  - Administration tasks like typing up recipes and other kitchen information

The CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop Participants also identified benefits for including others such as:

- Bringing new ways and styles of cooking
- Learning from others
- Keeps the group interesting
- So the person will enjoy the community

The group identified some actions that could occur to ensure community kitchens work well and manage challenging issues or conflict. One of the issues raised was the consumption of alcohol in an adult group meeting in the evening. It was noted that this issue did make others feel uncomfortable, there was concern regarding safety for travelling after by car and the community kitchen is part of a health promoting initiative. Another issue raised was a

dominating person who meant well but made some people feel uncomfortable. The participants identified solutions to these issues and ways to prevent others as follows;

### **Community kitchen roles**

- Identify skills of people in the group – some people will be more comfortable to do a particular task, eg. A person may have good computer skills and happy to type out recipes. Be mindful of peoples literacy and mathematical levels.
- Build capacity of others by supporting them to assist with a task – partner them with a person who has more confidence
- Confirm tasks - who is doing each particular task eg. shopping, leading the next session, bringing along particular items

### **Preventing conflict**

- Establish the group rules and procedures of the community kitchen – these should be developed with input from participants and become standard practice of the kitchen. Consider including information on the purpose of the community kitchen, consumption of alcohol, speaking about personal issues and conflict
- Develop a Group Kit for the Community Kitchen that includes the key information that has been decided by the group. Have it available at each community kitchens session and/or provide a copy to new participants. It will help with tricky situations and/or conditions

To support the participants take the information back to their community kitchens a summary with information that was gathered, links to resources, presentations and key contacts was put together as part of the workshop evaluation report which was provided to all participants.

### **2012 – 2013**

During 2012 – 2013 Northern Districts Community Health Service has worked with the Lakes District CUaS Community Kitchen to take on more of the responsibilities in coordinating the cooking session. An initiative that has been successful is the development of a role referred to as “Head Chef”.

This requires one of the group participants to be responsible for the cooking session with identified duties that have been written as a check list. The duties are as follows;

1. Have confirmed numbers of participants for the session.
2. Buy the ingredients of the recipe that was decided at the previous session.
3. Collect the money from the participants on the night.
4. Lead the cooking of the recipes.
5. Assist the group in deciding the recipes for the next session.

The role is shared amongst the participants and is handed to the next person by passing over the Cooking Up a Storm Trolley.

This initiative has been successful as it has encouraged shared leadership within the group and less reliance on the supporting agency leader.

### **Summary of Increased Knowledge**

#### **2009 - 2011**

While the target is to increase the knowledge of community members and facilitators the knowledge of the CUaS Working Group was increased in the realisation that Community Kitchen Facilitators and as volunteers would need to be well supported in such a role.

The Community Kitchen Manual and Community Kitchen website is a very useful resource and tool that has information for community kitchens, monitoring and evaluation tools and presentations to build capacity for key topics.

## **2011 – 2012**

Over the twelve months there have been a range of areas that knowledge has increased for community kitchen participants and the CUaS Working Group, these are as follows;

### *Community Kitchen Participants*

- The CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop did increase the knowledge of the community kitchen representatives. Even though there was prior knowledge regarding food safety, participating in a community group, nutrition and food access and kitchen safety all participants gained further information and refreshed what they already knew.
- Bringing people together is very beneficial and there is a great opportunity to learn by sharing information. One participant provided comment that the workshop format “was good to hear other perspectives or views to what you have used”. There was interest from participants in attending further community kitchen workshops that involved other groups, (not just CUaS Community Kitchens).

### *CUaS Community Kitchen Working Group*

#### *Community Kitchen Workshop*

- The time, format and topics of the CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop worked very well
- Once a commitment has been made to host a workshop for community members and groups delivering on this should happen even if less than expected numbers attend.

#### *Engagement and inclusion*

- Consider broadly ways people can be included in a group or program if they are unable to participate in the core activity eg. administration tasks, research
- Promotion and engagement other than flyers and newsletters should include meeting with and talking to a broad range of people and in a variety of settings
- Do not rely on one form of communication – a range of methods is needed and include others to spread message
- Be prepared to adapt and change to accommodate people and community

#### *Community groups*

- Support groups to establish a “group kit” which may include agreed rules and procedures, other key information and resources. The kit should be available for all who come into the group so they have an understanding of the group and are made comfortable.

#### *Community Kitchen Facilitator Position*

- Finding volunteers in the community to take on the role as a Community Kitchen Facilitator is challenging. This challenge should carefully be considered when planning for a community kitchen and possibly the volunteer and more than one person engaged and involved from early stages such as in planning and establishing a community kitchen.

#### *Evaluation*

- Clarify methods of evaluation and reporting in partnership projects so there is agreement on how tools are used and a reasonable element of consistency in reporting.

## **2012 – 2013**

Ownership and leadership in a community group can be addressed by implementing strategies that fit with the environment such as the “Head Chef” role in a community kitchen. Sharing responsibility amongst the group removes reluctance as it does not become a permanent role but a supported and shared position. Clear and documented tasks and a hand over process appear to support sharing leadership in a group. This knowledge is most transferrable to other settings and groups CUaS Working Group members may work with.



## Organisational Development

A Project Plan for Cooking Up a Storm – Community Kitchen Project was constructed once confirmation of the funding application had been received. The Project Plan showed the position and deliverables of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project in the SMPCP Strategic and Operational Plan, identified the stakeholders, links to other projects, leadership structure and roles of the Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee, CUaS Working Group and the Project Coordinator.

Within the plan a timeline was developed in line with strategies of the Integrated Health Promotion Plan, Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

As the project progressed and there were key deliverables as far as activity and promotion was concerned a detailed timeline was established broken in to weekly components. This document was referred to regularly from December 2010 to and beyond June 2011. The timeline had to be reviewed and adjusted to accommodate the interruption and delay in January and February and for the time period the Project Coordinator was on leave.

Throughout the project there has been a range of documents that have articulated key deliverables. Reflection regarding these strategic documents from the Cooking Up a Storm Project Coordinator

“Strategic planning for the project was paramount for the success of the project, and was often an arduous and lengthy process, but actually helped me learn more about SMPCP and the community kitchen aims. This documentation proved to be very useful in moving forward with the project, particularly when the delay experienced due to postponement because of flooding across the region meant that many steps were required to be carried out more than once. The communication strategy document in particular, was an extremely useful tool when referring back to contact with community members which had been previously made.”

The time in which it took to develop these documents to where they were endorsed was considerable; coupled with the delay due to the unexpected floods the time spent engaging with communities became limited.

Reflection from CUaS Working Group members;

“At times an over abundance of supporting paperwork to the point that this sometimes felt like the only strategy in this community development project and reducing the available time for community engagement and facilitation.”

“Because the planning stage has taken so long, we’ve now got to the implementation stage and there isn’t the same resourcing that there was earlier which has the potential to put more pressure on individual organisations and staff.”

The CUaS Working Group meeting minutes indicate there was little communication and feedback when requested of the CUaS Working Group with most occurring at the meetings. This resulted in documents taking a lot longer to be finalised and possibly caused some frustration for the Project Coordinator and the CUaS Working Group.

### **Cooking Up a Storm Stage 2 2011 - 2012**

To guide CUaS Stage 2 a Project Brief was developed which articulated the roles and responsibilities for all involved in the project and at the catchment and the local level, it included the evaluation plan and evaluation table which drew out the particular evaluation elements that were to occur with the community. The CUaS Stage 2 Project Brief was developed with input and endorsement from the lead agencies of CUaS Community Kitchens however there was some feeling that communication prior needed to be stronger regarding roles and responsibilities expected for implementation.

The CUaS Stage 2 Project Brief was referred to periodically throughout the project but could have been used more effectively by reviewing at each CUaS Working Group meeting to monitor items needing further attention and establishing the process for undertaking those actions.

The CUaS Community Kitchen Reporting Template was designed to reflect SMPCP IHP Evaluation Plan for CUaS and was expected to be completed and submitted to SMPCP staff quarterly for collation. It was

recognised in September 2011 this frequency was not appropriate as the community kitchens were still working on being established. It was agreed the CUaS Community Kitchen Reporting Template be completed and submitted at the end of June 2012 so the twelve month period was captured.

This tool has worked well in most parts and was used by the agencies in writing their case studies of their community kitchen. For overall collation of information providing further detail on how to report such as in percentage, numbers or specific detail would have made this tool more efficient and catchment wide collation stronger. The tools that were sourced from the Community Kitchen Manuals and used to capture information worked well.

The CUaS Community Kitchen Participant Interview was originally going to be undertaken twice during 2011 and 2012 but this was not a reasonable expectation due to the infancy of the community kitchens. Two of the community kitchen sites completed participant interviews with different approaches so the information captured varies greatly.

Overall the evaluation plan, reporting template and tools have worked well in guiding and collecting data. Further work with agency members in developing an evaluation plan, building capacity on the use of evaluation tools and having agreement on reporting measurements would strengthen evaluation results.

### **2012 – 2013**

As there was agreement to maintain the CUaS Working Group for the twelve month period it was agreed to continue with evaluation in a limited format. The CUaS Reporting Template was reviewed and the two areas maintained included basic process evaluation regarding reach and impact evaluation of consumer participation and leadership. Reports have been received from two CUaS Community Kitchen sites.

### **Summary of Organisational Development**

#### **2009 - 2011**

The Project Plan and timeline has provided management support, connection to strategic plans and guided health promotion activity so it was progressed.

Documents that will guide a project are extremely valuable but a clear understanding of the purpose of documents needs to be in place. The development of supporting documents should be completed within an appropriate time as this assists with steadily moving forward and maintaining continuity.

It is important for members of a working group to respond to a Project Coordinator or other key person in a timely manner and not just at meetings so information can be finalised and work at hand can continue to be progressed efficiently. It is also necessary for a Project Coordinator to adopt other processes to engage with working group members in seeking information so steady progress is made.

#### **2011 – 2012**

The CUaS Stage 2 Project Brief was endorsed by the CUaS Working Group but more work needed to occur with project partners to have ownership, agreement, understanding of the roles and responsibilities and to see this as a useful tool to progress the CUaS Community Kitchen project.

The CUaS Reporting Template worked well in the fact it was clear regarding identification of tools that were provided and used for evaluation. The review of the timeframes for using tools and reporting was adapted to be achievable and present the whole year – this should be noted as a learning for evaluation processes ensuring they are realistic and work for all settings. More work needed to occur with Working Group members regarding evaluation and reporting, this includes;

- Discussing how and when to use evaluation tools
- Agree on reporting measures eg. Percentages or numbers
- Completing all evaluation components

#### **2012 - 2013**

The maintenance of reduced evaluation has allowed for ongoing monitoring of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project. Ultimately after four years there is only one CUaS Community Kitchen that is continuing and working toward sustainability.

## Resources

In March 2010 SMPCP sent out Expressions of Interests for Member Agencies to hold the CUaS Project Coordinator position and Gannawarra Shire Council were successful in this process. In June 2010 the 'Project Coordinator' of the Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership Cooking Up a Storm (CUaS) Project (a Gannawarra Shire Council Staff member) commenced in this role for a 12 month period.

The CUaS Project Coordinator was appointed to support the SMPCP Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Committee and the CUaS Working Group in planning, implementing and evaluating the CUaS Community Kitchen Project. The Coordinator was also responsible for the promotion and administration of the CUaS Community Kitchen at a LGA level with support from the CUaS Working Group members and other agencies, this included liaising with local agencies in which the community kitchens are to be located and ensuring the future sustainability of the project.

The resource of key professions was required throughout the project and this was mostly achieved through engagement through the CUaS Working Group. The Environmental Health Officers from each LGA were included in the CUaS Working Group as their input was essential in establishing what would be a suitable venue for a Community Kitchen and providing advice to interested communities and the Selection Panel. For Swan Hill and Gannawarra the EHO's were engaged and were efficient in providing advice when needed. Buloke Shire proved to be challenging and this resource not forthcoming.

Reflection regarding this resource from the Project Coordinator;

"The process from here involved having environmental health officers inspect and assess the kitchens with the CUaS Selection Panel making the final decision as to which community group for each local government area was successful. I found communicating with the environmental health officers sometimes challenging particularly in the Buloke Shire, as the EHO only worked on certain days, and was then often out of the office for most of those days."

### **Cooking Up a Storm Stage 2**

#### **2011 - 2012**

The Lead Agencies were resourced to support their work for 2011 – 2012 with the local communities to establish CUaS Community Kitchens, resources contributed to staff costs, support for local activity and catchment activity and promotional material.

Each community kitchen site received a small grant to assist with purchasing basic items such as pantry items and tools.

Without the additional resources the Lead Agencies may not have had the capacity to provide as much dedicated time to working with and supporting communities establish the CUaS Community Kitchens.

The state of readiness in July 2011 for the CUaS Community Kitchen sites varied greatly. The Lakes District had strong community interest and several people involved in completing and submitting the expression of interest. For Nyah West one person completed the expression of interest and it was recognised that considerable support would be needed to establish a community kitchen. The Sea Lake expression of interest was completed and submitted by the Neighbourhood House with the view that a community member was going to support the community kitchen – this did not eventuate.

In some of the CUaS Community Kitchens additional resources have come in the way of small financial grants and donations of local produce, these have been reported as a valuable resource for the community kitchen.

**Lakes District** CUaS Community Kitchen has been supported by Northern District Community Health Service who worked with the people who submitted the expression of interest to commence local planning for the community kitchen. The community worked out when they would meet and the format of the group using the local hall as the venue. Over the twelve months group participants moulded the format to suit their needs and made agreements on operation and issues of the group. There is still a reliance on Northern Districts Community Health Service particular to maintain communication and manage the money.

Swan Hill District Health endeavoured to engage with the **Nyah West** and surrounding communities to initiate a CUaS Community Kitchen. With a small group of interested community members a program lead by Swan Hill

District Health commenced. Finding the most suitable venue for the community kitchen was a challenge, the CFA was the preferred site but due to the condition of the kitchen was not suitable. A location slightly out of the town centre was eventually utilised. Several community members did take ownership of the community kitchen and appeared to be managing well, over time people left due to changed circumstances and recruiting others was once again a challenge. There was a reliance on the supporting agency to assist with implementing strategies to maintain the ongoing activity of the community kitchen.

**Sea Lake** Neighbourhood House had to first build the understanding of community kitchens locally – the information session had been held in Culgoa which was a neighbouring community and Sea Lake members did not attend. The Youth CUaS Community Kitchen commenced in the Neighbourhood House which had a ready resourced kitchen and space. The Youth Community Kitchen group met consistently with reliance on the Neighbourhood House coordinator to provide overseeing support, other community members have not been involved.

### **2012 – 2013**

The lead agencies of CUaS Community Kitchens continued to work with the communities with the aim of ongoing and sustaining community kitchens but with mixed results.

Sea Lake Neighbourhood House coordinator was on maternity leave from the start of July 2012 so without the leader or assistance of another person the Youth CUaS Community Kitchen did not continue in 2012 – 2013. The interim coordinator did endeavour to find a person to support the youth and while the community, (adults and youth) indicated they wanted it to continue this was unsuccessful.

Swan Hill District Health had a change of staff early in 2013 when there was activity to move the community kitchen to the refurbished CFA venue and kitchen and further promotion and engagement with the community. It appears this change, lack of response from community and challenges with some involved in the CFA diluted the desire for a community kitchen in Nyah West so it was decided to cease activity of the Nyah West CUaS Community Kitchen.

Lake District has maintained their CUaS Community Kitchen program with ongoing support from Northern District Community Health Service. Over the past twelve months the lead agency has reported they are raising items such as leadership of the group and managing the money for discussion and solution generation. Gradually the reliance on the organisation is being lessened and community is taking the ownership. The same representative from Northern Districts Community Health Service has been involved since the start of the overall project and work with the community.

### **Summary of Leadership**

#### **2009 - 2011**

SMPCP member agency, Gannawarra Shire Council took a leadership role in the project as employer of the Cooking Up a Storm Project Coordinator.

Other organisations were able to provide resources for the CUaS Community Kitchen Project this was particularly noted in the support of the Environmental Health Services who advised on kitchen and food safety requirements. This is an example of local resources that can very well support a project.

#### **2011 – 2012**

During this twelve months it is evident that the communities did look for organisations to lead and provide significant leadership in the initiation and development of new initiatives or programs. Leadership required of organisations does vary depending on the 'readiness' of a community and the assets both physical and practical that are available.

Thorough community consultation and understanding of a proposal prior to commencing an initiative should be undertaken, this would assist the lead organisation know what there is to work with, assets and barriers, and if the broader community is genuinely interested and willing to be engaged.

Reliance on an organisations needs to be managed with strategies in place at the start that will accommodate resources that are available, capacity of the organisation, adaptive processes to meet the progress of community and inclusion of sustainable activity.

Factors that appear to be supportive of commencing community kitchens efficiently is community interest and understanding, local leaders who are willing to assist with initiating and ongoing activity and a supporting agency to take on key actions such as communication and handling money.

**2012 – 2013**

While the lead agencies were still involved with the CUaS Community Kitchens the Lakes District is the only community kitchen that has consistently continued and working toward independence. The lead agency is working with the community for this to happen openly discussing the topics that earlier on were to hard – this indicates the Lakes District is maturing and participants are willing to be leaders of the community initiative.

In the settings of Sea Lake and Nyah West the reliance on the lead agency was high to the community kitchen continuing. Changing staff in the organisation did have an effect with impact of background knowledge, relationships with the community and capacity.

## OVERALL SUMMARY

### Reach

The most effective method of engaging potential people and communities in the initial promotion of CUaS Community Kitchen Project was through established networks such as progress and community groups.

The printed brochure for CUaS was a valuable tool in attracting interest and providing details on the CUaS Community Kitchen Project, community eligibility and explaining what community kitchens are about.

Other methods of promotion such as media releases and advertising have not contributed greatly to informing and attracting interest in the CUaS Community Kitchen Project.

Less than the target of sixty people were engaged in community information sessions and less than the target of six communities completed an expression of interest for CUaS Community Kitchen Project.

CUaS Community Kitchens were established in the communities of Sea Lake – Buloke LGA, Nyah West – Swan Hill LGA and Lakes District – Gannawarra LGA with two community kitchens established for adults and one for youth. Each community kitchen was linked with and supported by a local agency with the purpose of them assisting with the establishment of the community kitchen and working toward sustainability.

It was found that strategies are needed to be ongoing in engaging others into community kitchens to maintain numbers for viability; support and action for this was required and looked for from the supporting lead agency.

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has highlighted that to successfully engage with communities requires working closely with the community through established networks, provide some written information and being mindful of current community capacity. Communities do require support from organisations for more than twelve months if a project or program is to become sustainable.

### Increased Knowledge

#### **Community Members**

Community information sessions are a good method of increasing the knowledge of potential participants for a proposal, concept and opportunity. The CUaS Community Information sessions did increase the knowledge of the thirty six participants regarding the proposal of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project and the benefits for participants and a community.

The CUaS Community Kitchens did increase the knowledge of those who participated with improving skills that will support healthier lifestyles relating to nutrition. The areas that the CUaS Community Kitchens have increased knowledge are for cooking, budgeting and shopping for ingredients, this appears to be slightly more significant for youth than adults as the adults tend to have some prior knowledge and experience.

The CUaS Community Kitchen has also shown a greater benefit to men in regards to increasing their knowledge relating to food.

A workshop setting is an appropriate method to impart and increase knowledge, it does accommodate prior knowledge, allows for refreshing understanding and gaining some more knowledge via information provision, discussion and sharing with others. In the case of the CUaS Community Kitchen Workshop all participants reported to their knowledge having increased on the topics of food safety, participating in a community group, nutrition and food access and kitchen safety.

The CUaS Community Kitchen setting has increased the knowledge and capacity of participants to be more socially included and inclusive. The setting has appeared to have removed barriers so people who would not normally associate are conversing and working together in an environment that is productive and equal.

### **CUaS Working Group Members**

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has increased the knowledge of the CUaS Working Group by providing information to consider and use in future project and program development and implementation. Summary of these considerations area as follows;

- Community Information sessions are a good place to gain knowledge of a community; you can assess the readiness and interest for a project or program, gain an understanding of the local assets both people and infrastructure and gain an insight into community structures such as communication and drivers
- A workshop is a good method of building the knowledge relating to key topics relevant to people participating in a program (CUaS Community Kitchen) and for leading organisers to gather information for potential strategies E.g. Engagement, promotion, development of supporting resources
- Engagement strategies need to be targeted – reliance on newspapers, newsletters and posters will most likely see limited interest or people engaged. Working with local community networks is important along with implementing other strategies to engage with others who are not involved in these mainstream groups. This can take a considerable amount of time and effort and thinking outside the ‘box’.
- There can be reluctance for community groups to lead and take ownership when there is support from a professional organisation. Applying strategies that are appropriate to the environment and with clear processes can be supportive of transition phases. The ‘Head Chef’ role, which has been applied in the Lakes District – Gannawarra LGA, is relevant to a kitchen setting, the position is shared amongst all participants and there are clear instructions of the tasks that are required to be completed.
- If volunteers are expected to be involved in a key part of a program or project source and include them in early stages of planning and before working more broadly with community – if volunteers are not available this can have a significant impact on the community project or program and strategies need to be in place to accommodate this.
- Utilise resources to increase the knowledge of project partners such as sharing information of experienced peers, refer to guide books and websites – look at evidence and use resources and tools that already exist
- Recognise there is a variance in the thinking, skills and knowledge of all project partners. Take the time to discuss and agree on how tools particularly for evaluation purposes will be used so there is consistency across a partnership project.
- Community kitchens are a supportive environment to increase the knowledge of participants regarding nutrition and also increase their capacity to be more socially included and inclusive of others.

### **Partnerships**

From initiation of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project funding application the project has been operated and driven as a partnership project. Over the life of the project there have been changes in project drivers, representative staff, the level of commitment and adjustment to project delivery.

Throughout the project there has been a CUaS Working Group which was a subcommittee of SMPCP Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee and has been viewed as most important throughout all stages of the project. Involvement in the working group has varied throughout the project mostly due to relevance with organisation activity and capacity of the organisation to participate and contribute to the project.

For the first stage of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project Gannawarra Shire Council, Swan Hill District Health and Northern District Community Health Services were the organisations most engaged; others who contributed intermittently included East Wimmera Health Service and Swan Hill Rural City Council.

For stage two when focused work with the selected CUaS Community Kitchen sites was to commence a new organisation was brought in, Mallee Track Health and Community Services – Sea Lake Neighbourhood House, who joined Swan Hill District Health and Northern District Community Health Services. East Wimmera Health Service was also included to maintain a link with the Cook In Community Kitchen project which had been the intention throughout the life of CUaS.

Overall the partnership has developed, implemented and evaluated the CUaS Community Kitchen Project spanning three LGA's. The benefits of a working group include; a range of views and information being brought to the table, support and sharing of key tasks, peer support, local knowledge, solution generation and sharing of knowledge.

Barriers for the CUaS Working Group has been a reduced or change in capacity of key organisations to participate, change in staff diluting understanding of the background of the project and expected role in the partnership and interest.

The time that the planning stage took, which included the development of information that was to be provided to the community, was underestimated by the partnership but may have been more efficient with stronger commitment to communication and providing feedback.

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has shown that a partnership project involving three LGA's and a range of organisations can have success. Key items to be mindful of in establishing a partnership project right at the beginning are;

- Capacity of organisation to manage involvement for the life of the project
- Clear understanding of expectation, roles, responsibilities and commitment
- Process to ensure continuity with change of staff so organisation involvement is maintained at expected level
- Who needs to be involved to drive the project and ensuring they are on board and committed at the start – do not expect they will just get involved

## **Organisational Development**

Throughout CUaS Community Kitchen Project guiding documents have been developed and endorsed by the CUaS Working Group, these have included documents that articulate the project structure, roles, responsibilities, timelines, working group terms of reference and others.

While documents are endorsed it is possible they could have been used more strongly to guide the work being undertaken and ensure progress of what has been agreed to.

To support evaluation activities the CUaS Reporting Template was developed which identified tools and timeframes for these to be used. The partnership did recognise and modify the timeframes which were recognised as too prescriptive and did not accommodate the different stages each CUaS Community Kitchen was at. Generally the CUaS Reporting Template worked well for all partners.

With hindsight more work should have been undertaken with the project partners discussing the evaluation tools and how to report so there was consistency across the catchment and therefore making evaluation more robust. The evaluation and reporting mechanisms have worked well in monitoring the enablers and barriers of the CUaS Community Kitchens.

## **Leadership**

Throughout the CUaS Community Kitchen Project there have been four SMPCP member agencies that have been the leaders, these are Gannawarra Shire Council, Swan Hill District Health, Northern Districts Community Health Service and Mallee Track Health and Community Services – Sea Lake Neighbourhood House. These organisations have received financial resources at some point through the project.

Other organisation did contribute at key points during the project by providing resources such as environmental health services and expert advice.



The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has shown that communities do look for organisations to lead and provide significant leadership in the initiation and development of new initiatives or programs. Leadership required of organisations does vary depending on the 'readiness' of a community and the assets both physical and practical that are available. Reliance on an organisations needs to be managed, this can be challenging for the leaders when there is a limit to resources and capacity.

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has shown that thorough community consultation and ensuring there is strong understanding of a proposal should be undertaken prior to commencing an initiative. Lead organisation need to know what there is to work with, assets and barriers, and if the broader community is genuinely interested and willing to be engaged.

Factors that appear to be supportive of commencing community kitchens efficiently is community interest and understanding, local leaders who are willing to assist with initiating and ongoing activity and a supporting agency to take on key actions such as communication and handling money.

While all the lead agencies have still been involved with the CUaS Community Kitchens the Lakes District is the only community kitchen that has managed to consistently continue and are working toward independence. The lead agency is now working with the community openly discussing the topics that earlier on were to hard indicating the Lakes District is maturing and participants are willing to be leaders of the community initiative.

In the settings of Sea Lake and Nyah West the reliance on the lead agency has always been high and along with changing staff and capacity of the lead organisation has seen the CUaS Community Kitchens become independent or sustained.

## SUMMARY OF IMPACT

### Consumer Participation and Leadership

The CUaS Community Kitchens have seen positive outcomes with participants forming new friendships and broadening their circle of friends when in other social settings. The CUaS Community Kitchen setting has reduced some barriers to social interaction that may be found in settings where there are more people and groups already established.

In the Sea Lake group a new person to the region found it helped them to meet others that she normally wouldn't have associated with due to age, social and schooling differences.

The Nyah West group reported an increase in volunteering or being involved in community activities from 34% to 69% and Lakes District reported one of their participants has become involved in the Neighbourhood House and taken on the role of treasurer.

The Lakes District group has seen the men involved in the kitchen taking on key tasks for the group and with leadership roles being taken on. This has evolved as confidence has been built up. Some participants have expanded their social interests by becoming involved with other community groups.

In the CUaS Community Kitchens solutions to challenges have been addressed by the group with some guidance and facilitation by the leading agency, examples of these have been regarding consumption of alcohol and managing people who are dominating.

All the CUaS Community Kitchens reported participants contributing to the program they chose to progress; they made decisions on menus and roles people would take on, also planning activity for the next sessions which in some instances were outside the usual facility or format of the community kitchen.

Overall the CUaS Community Kitchens have allowed for active participation in the decisions relating to the community kitchens. The setting has developed confidence of participants to take on leadership roles within the group and more broadly in the community.

### Changed Attitudes

Positive changes have been reported for participants involved in CUaS Community Kitchens which would support healthier lifestyles. These include:

- Cooking more at home
- Increased confidence because of increased skills
- Enjoying interacting with friends and meeting new people
- Helping others learn recipes that include vegetables that children would eat
- Being organised and work in a team
- Developing strategies to address challenges faced within the group
- Assisting the CALD ladies with Australian type cooking

Alcohol consumption was an issue that had to be discussed by the Lakes District Group. As the session was held in the evening several participants brought along alcoholic beverages to consume. An agreement on the level of consumption, safety within the kitchen and when travelling and linking the community kitchen to the fact it was part of a health promotion activity alleviated the problem for the group.

The CUaS Community Kitchens have demonstrated that the setting can be a catalyst for change by increasing knowledge and skill and providing a vehicle where this can occur that is relaxed and socially interactive.

## Community Strengthening Social Capital

A Community Kitchen Participant Interview tool was developed to gather information on participation and if the community kitchens had any influence to this. The tool was provided to the lead agency late in the reporting time contributing to a range of results including it not being used or used but not in a formal interview setting following the guidelines. Data collection via this method has not been successful for all the CUaS Community Kitchen sites.

However by observations and other reporting tools information can be drawn to indicate the CUaS Community Kitchens have had a positive effect on *Increasing participation in community life, including social and physical activities*. It has been reported that;

- There is interest in all communities for the CUaS Community Kitchens to continue
- Participants were able to work together and make decisions on how the kitchen operates and roles and tasks needed to be done in each kitchen
- The community kitchen was a good way for new people to meet others e.g. "People who were new to the Nyah West community were asked to come along and join in, was a great way to meet people" and "A great social outing, we know how to cook, it is just good to cook and enjoy a meal with other people".

Other reported findings are;

- 2 participants are more confident doing other activities and one is not
- One participant now assists aged care and one is more courageous in general
- Elderly male: "I am in a lot of community groups in Kerang but I didn't really know anyone out at Lake Charm so it is good to come along and meet people"
- Mother of four " This is the only meal in a month that I can eat alone. And no the kids cannot come along"
- Middle aged single woman "I have lived here a couple of years and through Cooking Up a Storm I have meet more people than I had in all the time before"

From information gathered by the Community Kitchen Before and After Participant Survey it emerged that the two most prominent reasons people joined the CUaS Community Kitchen were to;

- Increase social contact and make new friends
- Learn how to cook and prepare meals, learn new recipes and healthy eating
- At the Nyah West group there were 11 responses to *wanting to make new friends* and 10 to *try something new* these were higher than answers relating to cooking.

The CUaS Community Kitchens have increased social connections for those that participated in the community kitchens which has achieved a purpose of the funding received for the project. CUaS Community Kitchens have achieved the expected impact of *increased participation in community life, including social and physical activities*.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been drawn from the information and knowledge gained from the CUaS Community Kitchen Project. The project has highlighted considerations relating to *Evidence, Community Engagement, Capacity Building* and *Partnerships* that SMPCP member, associate members and others could consider strengthening their work relating to integrated health promotion and working with the community.

### Evidence

- Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee build their understanding of the food systems in the southern Mallee catchment by considering the following;
  - Victorian healthy food basket survey data
  - Explore the role of local food production and markets as supports for access to nutritious food e.g. Koondrook Barham farmers market
  - Exploring community development approaches to increasing food access
- SMPCP members and associates thoroughly assess and understand community assets, enablers and barriers prior to initiating community projects and programs and be mindful of capacity of small communities

### Community Engagement

- SMPCP members maintain the link between the CUaS Community Kitchen sites and supporting agency to assist with engagement for future work relating to Integrated Health Promotion activity, food access, social inclusion and other activities
- SMPCP members and associates adopt a broad range of strategies to engage and inform communities of future opportunities and projects available to the community

### Capacity Building

- Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee reflect on the outcomes of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report and utilise in building capacity of SMPCP members, associates and others in the areas of;
  - Community needs assessment
  - Community engagement and development
  - Project management
- Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee consider options to build the capacity of agencies to work in partnership including;
  - Understanding the roles and responsibilities when working in partnership
  - Planning, implementation and evaluation
  - Sourcing resources
- Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee investigate opportunities to build the knowledge of members in regards to all aspects of Integrated Health Promotion evaluation

### Partnerships

- Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Committee present the learning of CUaS Community Kitchen Project to the partnership
- SMPCP continue to look for opportunities to undertake catchment wide projects which incorporates local level work

## CONCLUSION

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project commenced as an SMPCP partnership project in 2009 with funding from the Sustaining Community Wellbeing Grants and direction provided by SMPCP member agencies and the CUaS Working Group. From July 2010 to June 2011 a Project Coordinator was engaged, auspiced by Gannawarra Shire Council, to coordinate the project with support from the CUaS Working Group and ultimately work with the three selected communities to establish a CUaS Community Kitchen.

The CUaS Working Group was initially formed with an invitation to SMPCP member and associate members which over time saw a core group be established as the project was relevant to them and they had capacity to be involved. In July 2011 the CUaS Working Group was reviewed and re-established with Swan Hill District Health, Northern District Community Health Service and Mallee Track Health and Community Service – Sea Lake Neighbourhood House who were directly involved in the implementation of the CUaS Community Kitchen. East Wimmera Health Service were also included in the working group with the aim of maintaining a link to their Cook In Community Kitchen Project.

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has progressed through three key stages;

- Project planning and development
- Community engagement, promotion and community selection
- Implementation and sustainability.

The planning and development stage was ultimately lengthier than had been expected but the end result was a suite of information and tools that informed eligible communities of the project, format of a community kitchen and benefits of a community kitchen and how to submit an expression of interest.

Methods used to engage with eligible communities included media promotion, community information sessions and providing information to established groups and networks. The most effective method has shown to be using existing networks and promotional flyer. It should be noted that promotion to communities had begun when the southern Mallee region was greatly impacted by floods so the project was placed on hold for approximately six weeks. Once the project recommenced it was noted that for some communities who had shown some interest a community kitchen was now outside their scope and capacity.

Four expressions of interest were received which was less than the target of six and the level of community interest and capacity varied highlighting the readiness of the sites needed to be taken in to consideration with decisions for the next steps.

The communities of Sea Lake – Buloke LGA, Nyah West – Swan Hill LGA and Lakes District – Gannawarra LGA were successful with their expression of interest. The community that was not successful was referred to a local organisation that was able to work with them to develop a social program suitable to their interests and needs.

The selection process noted that all communities would need assistance to establish the community kitchens and as the Project Coordinator tenure was coming to an end CUaS Stage 2 was developed. This involved engaging and resourcing a supporting agency aligned with the LGA so they could dedicate staff and time to assist with the establishment of the CUaS Community Kitchen and move toward sustainability.

The level of broad community input in the expression of interest did have an impact on to how quickly the CUaS Community Kitchens commenced.

In the instance of Lakes District, supported by Northern District Community Health Service, the community met and formed the basis for the CUaS Community Kitchen. This community kitchen which has involved adults has seen continuity, increased capacity of participants and strategies developed and adopted by the community group to maintain and lead the community kitchen into the future. Northern District Community Health Service is continuing to provide support to the group but actively facilitating conversations so the group will make the decisions regarding complete ownership.

Sea Lake CUaS Community Kitchen required significant work by the supporting agency Mallee Track Health and Community Services – Sea Lake Neighbourhood House to commence a community kitchen for Youth. While the CUaS Community Kitchen was well attended by the youth and they and the community wanted it to be ongoing broader community support has not been forthcoming. The reliance on the organisation and the inability to engage a community volunteer as a support facilitator has resulted in the community kitchen not being sustained while the Coordinator of the Neighbourhood House was on extended leave.

The expression of interest from the Nyah West community did indicate that the broader community was not extensively engaged with the concept of a community kitchen and broad interest was not confirmed. Swan Hill District Health worked with the local action group and Swan Hill Rural City Council Community Planning Officer to engage community members and raise the profile of the CUaS Community Kitchen Project and opportunity that was available in the community. A time specific program led by Swan Hill District Health initiated the CUaS Community Kitchen, this did engage members of the community and a group formed. Members of the group coordinated themselves and developed the community kitchen to suit their needs, sorting out challenges as they arose while others in the community provided support by the way of produce.

As circumstances changed for participants numbers declined and the assistance of the lead organisation was once again sort to engage others to participate. Several strategies were agreed to including changing the venue to a newly refurbished central venue and methods of communication. Several barriers emerged during this time and the lead organisation had a change of staff. Broader community interest was ultimately not forthcoming and a decision was made to not continue on with the CUaS Community Kitchen in Nyah West.

*The expected outcome of one established and sustained CUaS Community Kitchen in the LGA's of Buloke, Gannawarra and Swan Hill has partly been met with a CUaS Community Kitchen being maintained in Gannawarra LGA in the Lakes District community.*

The CUaS Community Kitchens did increase the knowledge of participants to actions that can contribute to healthier lifestyles relating to ingredients and food choices, cooking skills and budgets which may go some way to increasing choices made to accessing nutritious food. Within the community kitchens nutrition is a consideration when choosing what to cook and access to all ingredients from regular sources such as supermarkets or home grown produce.

*The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has not increased access to nutritious food but has possibly increased consumption of nutritious food.*

All the CUaS Community Kitchens have reported that the main reason for participants to join the community kitchen was to increase social contact and make new friends. The setting of a community kitchen works very well in promoting and offering opportunities for community members to be socially connected. The CUaS Community Kitchen Project has demonstrated that the environment greatly enables people to meet others, remove prejudices that may come with social position and develop confidence and networks that are applicable in the broader community. The community kitchen setting works well for youth and adults, males and females, it can be flexible to accommodate the requirements of participants with decision making done as a collective.

*Community members have reported CUaS Community Kitchens have promoted and offered opportunities for all participants to be socially connected with the community.*

## NEXT STEPS

The CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report will be distributed to SMPCP Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Committee members and made available to others committees and networks.

This report will be reflected upon in developing the next SMPCP Strategic and Operational Plan 2013 – 2017 where decisions on what should be progressed in regards to integrated health promotion and other key projects. It should also be noted that this information does connect with other areas of SMPCP work such as social inclusion, chronic disease management and mental health and wellbeing and opportunities to share and present the outcomes of the project will be sort in the future.

## Reference to Cooking Up a Storm Community Kitchen Project Report – Information and Resources

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i	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 3
ii	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 12
iii	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 17
iv	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 18
v	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 19
vi	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 21
vii	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 60
viii	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 47
ix	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 62
x	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 70
xi	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 77
xii	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 15
xiii	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 24
xiv	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 26
xv	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 26
xvi	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 27
xvii	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 28
xviii	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 31
xix	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 34
xx	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 36
xxi	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 42
xxii	Refer to CUaS Community Kitchen Project Report Information and Resources Pg. 58





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