

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The **aims** of the consultation process for *eat well be active* Community Programs were to:

1. Contribute to the development of the EWBA Local Action Plan and engage local knowledge.
2. Build capacity of stakeholders through improved awareness and understanding of the key issues
3. Build awareness, support and ownership for EWBA and its messages
4. Identify potential members for EWBA local committee structures.

The *eat well be active* Community Programs consulted with a wide range of community agencies and members who had a potential interest in the project and reflected the full range of local community interests.

Consultation content

The EWBA consultations provided initial background information about the issue and the project itself, and concentrated on listening to participants' views of the barriers their community experience in relation to healthy eating and physical activity, and their ideas around potential strategies to address these barriers in their community.

Consultation format

The format of the Consultations was adapted according to the needs of each target group. The Consultation process was strongly supported and endorsed by the host Health Services.

In general, the consultations involved sharing general introductory information with the group as a whole, before breaking down into smaller groups of 4-8 participants for the consultation processes. By working in small groups, participants felt more comfortable in sharing their thoughts, participants were more likely to feel their voices were heard and allowed flexibility within the format where needed. A facilitator, whose role it was to ensure all participants were able to contribute to discussions, assisted each small group to ensure that discussions stayed broadly within the consultation questions. The facilitators were also able to recognise the important experience and knowledge that the participants brought to the discussions. The role of the facilitator was critical to groups being able to effectively participate, and thus the project ensured each facilitator was briefed and provided with relevant background information. In most cases, EWBA staff acted as the facilitators. However in many instances, additional health service staff were co-opted as facilitators, particularly when a group was already familiar with another staff member eg Aboriginal Health Workers. As the facilitation role was crucial to the process EWBA staff liaised with other staff with expertise in community consultation.

Consultation outcomes

The *eat well be active* Community Programs' consultation process provided detailed and rich data regarding the (perceived) barriers to healthy eating and physical activity for children, young people and their families living in Murray Bridge and Morphett Vale.

The consultations also provided detailed information on potential strategies for increasing healthy eating and physical activity for each community. As the community and its stakeholders identified the strategies, they are clearly relevant and acceptable to the community. This information on barriers and potential strategies has informed the development of the local Action Plans.

For a comprehensive report on the consultation process can be found in the Second Progress Report.