

Executive Summary of the First Progress Report, April 2005

Overweight and obesity has been identified as an important public health problem and also has serious social and economic impacts. South Australia, consistent with national and international trends, is experiencing a trend of increasing overweight and obesity across the whole population with recent data showing that the increase in weight is starting even before children begin school.

Healthy eating and physical activity are key factors in promoting healthy weight in a community. Changes at a number of levels and in various environments are needed and are likely to be best achieved through a whole of community approach that involves a combination of strategies in partnership with a range of stakeholders.

The South Australian Department of Health has allocated \$1.5 million over three years to the Eat Well Be Active (EWBA) Community Initiatives. EWBA comprises two linked projects – one in Morphett Vale (southern metropolitan Adelaide, through Noarlunga Health Services) and one in Murray Bridge (Hills Mallee country southern region, through Murray Mallee Community Health Service) – that aim to contribute to the promotion of healthy weight in children, young people and their families in two demonstration communities through promoting healthy eating and physical activity. EWBA will;

- promote healthy eating and physical activity in partnership with a variety of settings (eg. health, education, welfare, neighbourhoods, food supply, media) by addressing both structural and individual barriers
- determine the key components of a coordinated community approach to promoting physical activity and healthy eating that are sustainable and transferable to other areas
- determine the effectiveness of the community-wide initiatives to improve healthy eating and physical activity levels in the community.

Support and evaluation of the project is an integral component contracted out to a team who will provide high-level advice to EWBA on current best practice strategies and be responsible for the evaluation.

The EWBA staff members including the Manager, Project Coordinators and Administrative Assistants have been appointed and all but the Administrative Assistants are currently on board. The Evaluation and Support team have been selected through the open tender process and are likely to commence in April/May 2005. The EWBA Project Management Committee is responsible for coordinating and endorsing the development, implementation, evaluation and sustainability of EWBA and continues to meet monthly. The project's timeframe has been extended until 26 March 2008 in view of the delayed EWBA staff and Evaluation Team starting times.

Planning for the project has included the development of several key documents including a communication management protocol, guidelines for intersectoral collaboration and a timeline. Formal project implementation will begin with the commencement of the Evaluation and Support Team and Project Coordinators. Early contact with agencies to assist in the formation of partnerships during the project's consultation phase has commenced with

several state and local organisations from a range of sectors and further relationship building will continue in the lead up to the project's consultation phase.

Over the next six months the EWBA project will work towards significant outcomes including hosting 'professional development' healthy weight promotion workshops, consultations around priorities for action in promoting healthy eating and physical activity and the formation of intersectoral EWBA Local Advisory Groups in each project site to drive local EWBA Action Plans.

**Implemented by Southern Primary Health of Southern Adelaide Health Service
and Murray Mallee Community Health Service**