

CASE STUDY

Partnership for Change: Empowering Bendigo students through food & community

20

Sessions
delivered

7

Schools

129

Students

2,200

Meals

Our Story

Between July 2024 and June 2025, Bendigo Foodshare (BFS), in partnership with Bendigo Community Health Services (BCHS), delivered 20 Cooking for Change! (CFC) sessions to secondary schools in Greater Bendigo with low SEIFA (Socio-economic Indexes for Areas) scores.

The program, which began in 2021, aims to reduce food insecurity, build students' cooking skills, promote healthy eating, and foster social and cultural connections. Tailored to each school's needs through consultation, sessions targeted students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students and those in flexible or alternative learning environments.

Facilitated by BFS's qualified staff and supported by school staff, BFS volunteers and BCHS health promotion staff, the sessions focus on increasing students knowledge on the local food system, food relief access, food safety, food preparation and the importance of nutritious food.

Our Why

Tackling issues such as food insecurity and healthy eating is no easy feat, with many of its own challenges. By looking for unique opportunities to target these areas, we reduce the chance of duplication or wasting precious resources. Partnership, collaboration and sharing information are vital in making the most of what's available, while also leveraging other key areas. As food insecurity grows, CFC not only feeds students but equips them with essential life skills and a deeper understanding of food resilience in their community. It is this impact that has encouraged BCHS' to continue partnering with BFS to deliver an additional 36 sessions in 2025 and 2026.

The Result

- 81% of students would recommend the program
- 85% learned more about Bendigo Foodshare
- 72 % learnt about eating healthy
- 75% had increased confidence in food preparation

"One of the students who participated in the Cooking for Change program is a student that is timid and low in confidence and said it was one of the best days they've had at school, ever!"

- Teacher



Get in Touch! healthpromotion@bchs.com.au

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