

MACLEAN HIGH SCHOOL HEALTHY CANTEEN IMPLEMENTATION



My name is Danielle Bryant and I am the canteen manager at Maclean High School. The canteen is run by the Maclean High School P&C Association. Since the Healthy Canteen Strategy has been put in place, our canteen has been through many changes.

When I first learned of the changes being put in place I was unsure of what it would entail but looked forward to the challenge. Since attending a healthy canteens seminar in May, I have gained a huge amount of experience in how to audit a canteen and make appropriate changes. This also provided a great list of websites for referencing information and help to complete an audit. As a result, we are now 84% healthy canteen compliant, with the minimum requirement being 75%.



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At first I thought kids would be a little reluctant to change and honestly, some were. At first when I started making fresh low-fat fruit muffins as opposed to the single choice of bakery iced finger buns, I think they were a little stand offish. Gradually as children began to try them, and word spread, we went from making 1 dozen muffins a day and getting 4 dozen finger buns a day in, to now making 3-4 dozen muffins or more a day and ordering in 2 dozen finger buns a day and lucky to sell 1 and a half dozen of these, which we are now dropping to ordering in only a dozen and a half with the idea of fazing them out completely.

We also do daily specials which we have incorporated lots of vegetables in such as penne pasta bolognese (4 x vegetables), chicken noodle stir-fry (5 x vegetables), and curry chicken and rice (4 x vegetables). Recess options have gone from finger buns and chips to things such as yoghurt muesli tubs, snack boxes (crackers, fruit sticks and dips), fruit salad tubs, fruit muffins.

White bread has been replaced with multigrain, pie sales are down and rice paper rolls and wraps are up.

The biggest challenge with these changes is accessing fresh produce at an affordable price. Larger more populated areas such as Sydney have a vast choice of fresh produce at competitive prices making it affordable for canteens in larger areas to comply with the healthy eating strategy. This could be something that could be addressed with healthy canteens N.S.W. Our school is trying to be pro-active with this issue by creating our own canteen garden with basic produce to use daily such as tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers, herbs etc. It would be great if



some form of funding could be provided for remote area schools to be able to achieve this. Also assistance with finding volunteers for canteens is another issue.

To allow schools to provide healthy options for children, canteens need to be profitable to stay open. This is harder and harder with many canteens already paying a canteen manager and also now having to pay assistants to ensure successful daily operation due to lack of volunteers. If canteens have to close because they are not financially viable, healthy options become non-existent for those children who do not get them at home.

Danielle Bryant