

Youth and Family Focus

Veggie Patch

SHARING STORIES - LOCAL ACTION ON FOOD SECURITY

Determinant of food security:

Food availability and access

Sub-determinant:

Skill development and social support

Location & year:

North West Tasmania, 2013-2014

Story tellers:

Janine Phillis, Project Manager

Paul, Veggie Patch Project supervisor

Summary/Description

Youth and Family Focus on the North West Coast have been supporting Tasmanians to grow their own food, by building veggie gardens in their back yards.

Each person who asks for a veggie garden is interviewed about what they want, and the garden beds are designed around their needs. The Youth and Family Focus team gives advice and information to families based on what they want to grow, and visit again in the following months to check on the garden's progress and help with harvesting produce.

So far, Youth and Family Focus have built 35 garden beds across 18 homes in North West Tasmania, with plans to continue bringing backyard veggie patches to at least 60 more homes between Devonport and Smithton. They have specifically focused on building gardens for older people, and lower income families with children.

Benefits and achievements

One of the first people to benefit from the Veggie Patch project was an older gentleman who used to be a keen gardener. He now needs a frame to help him walk, and this has made it hard for him to get around the garden in recent years. Workers on the Veggie Patch project built raised beds in his back yard, which have made it easier for the gentleman to tend to his plants and has helped him to get back into gardening.

The mild winter also helped many of the families with veggie patches, the first herbs and vegetables were ready for harvesting only a few short months after the garden beds were built.



Challenges

The staff working on the Veggie Patch project faced some challenges while installing garden beds. The main difficulty the team had to manage was organising equipment to be delivered to the house from their suppliers at the right time, so that they could build garden beds as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The team at Youth and Family Focus found that communicating regularly with suppliers, and checking in with veggie patch recipients the day before construction helped to make the process smoother.

The North West coast was fortunate with a mild winter in 2013, which also helped with the building efforts.



Promotion

The Veggie Patch project is advertised through the Youth and Family Focus website and newsletters, and the project has been so well-received in the local area that there is currently a waiting list for veggie patches to be installed.

Community members can contact Youth and Family Focus directly if they would like the Veggie Patch crew to create a vegetable garden for them. People can also be referred into the program by project partners.

Funding

The Youth and Family Focus Veggie Patch project is supported by funding from the Food For All Tasmanians fund.

A number of organisations work in partnership with Youth and Family Focus to support the project, including the Salvation Army, Integrated Family Support Service, Circular Head Council, Serenity House, Latrobe Council, Devonport Council, Kentish Council, and Eastern Shore Community House.

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Information was compiled by **Population Health (DHHS)** in partnership with this initiative and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

