



1.
Introduction

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Rationale

In traditional times, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were very fit and healthy. People had control over all aspects of their life and survived on a wide range of nutritious foods, hunted and gathered from the land and sea.

Today, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people suffer the worst health of any group in Australia. Diseases such as obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, cancer and mental health problems are the leading causes of illness and death within this group.

Healthy food is important in both the prevention and treatment of these diseases. Research shows that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today have a diet that is high in fat and sugar and low in fibre and nutrient-dense foods. Nutrition knowledge, preferences and skills are some factors that contribute to these eating habits.

Good nutrition is important throughout life, from the time we are born through to old age. Poor nutrition during the early years can lead to ill health in later life or the next generation.¹ Future eating habits are being formed as children grow up, so good nutrition is particularly important to prevent taste preferences for unhealthy food. In most cases, eating practices during childhood and adolescence are indicative of eating practices in adulthood.² Nutrition is a priority health issue within the Queensland Student Health and Wellbeing curriculum.

National and State initiatives to 'Close the Gaps' in education and health between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians require local initiatives to improve these outcomes. This education module contributes towards this by utilising the knowledge of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people demonstrating to all students that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued, while also presenting health information that can be accessed by all students.

The aims of *Healthy jarjums make healthy food choices* are to teach young children about foods that are good for their bodies, so that they may improve their quality of life through better nutrition and to contribute to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the early years curriculum through teaching children in years P-3 about healthy food from an Indigenous perspective.

1 Barker D. 1996. The fetal origins of adult disease. *Nutrition Today* 31:108-14

2 US Department of Health and Human Services. 1990. Healthy People 2000. National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives, Pub. No. 91-50213. DHHS: Boston.



Purpose

The purpose of this resource manual is four-fold. Firstly, to provide educators of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with culturally appropriate information, enjoyable activities and relevant resources that will enhance, preserve and promote awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural values, identity and customs. Secondly, to facilitate all children in the early years having access to valued Indigenous knowledges and opportunities to engage with a variety of stories, languages, beliefs and cultural practices of Australia’s Indigenous peoples as is recommended by Queensland Studies Authority in Learning P-3 Overview. Thirdly, to increase knowledge, awareness and skills in relation to nutrition practices. Fourthly, it will assist students to demonstrate the Essential Learnings from the Health and Physical Education Curriculum by the end of year 3, whilst also addressing the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (NATSIEP).

This resource manual has been designed to be versatile. It can be used in a thematic approach or as individual learning activities that can be used as the basis for establishing future programs or modules.

The *Healthy jarjums make healthy food choices* school nutrition program is designed for students in the early years (P-3), working towards achieving Essential Learnings of the Queensland School Curriculum, Health and Physical Education Key Learning Area. The Health and Physical Education Key Learning Area places focus on promoting the health of individuals and communities and enhancing personal development. However, the learning activities of *Healthy jarjums make healthy food choices* can be made applicable to the other Key Learning Areas such as: English, Maths, Languages other than English (LOTE), Technology, The Arts, Study of Society and the Environment and Science.

Why do students need a Culturally Appropriate Health Program?

Healthy jarjums make healthy food choices acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a rich and diverse culture, with unique customs, values and beliefs. Accordingly, the preservation and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and the development of a positive cultural identity, requires students to participate in culture-specific learning activities as well as have access to culturally-relevant information and materials.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies is not a separate learning area and should not be seen as an ‘add on’ or ‘extra’ subject for educators. Educators need to locate opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within the curriculum and existing Key Learning Areas. This manual demonstrates how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives can be integrated into the Health and Physical Education Syllabus and other key learning areas.

What is my role as an Educator?

Healthy jarjums make healthy food choices is designed to guide and assist educators by presenting suggested activities, lessons and resources. However, to provide culturally-relevant health education programs for your school, it is suggested that educators:

- Be aware of, and liaise with, the Indigenous health services and/or community organisations that are available in your local or surrounding areas.
- Establish some knowledge of specific services provided by local Indigenous organisations.
- Liaise with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers, community members and parents to identify the health needs, issues and priorities of the local community.
- Be an advocate and facilitator for reconciliation in your local community.
- Enquire about any experiences with previous health programs to determine what past strategies or methods have worked the best.
- Develop a long-term plan with on-going programs, based on the needs of the local community.
- Assess students' needs, abilities and interests and determine the time needed for various activities accordingly.

Healthy jarjums make healthy food choices encourages schools to ask Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health workers from their local community to help present the program. This enhances links with local community services and also provides a cross-cultural experience for the students.

Why do I need to consult with Community Members?

Consulting with your local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community is vital in the development of a culturally appropriate health education program that is suitable for your school community. This consultation promotes community development by providing opportunities for participation and ownership for the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Through consultation with the local community, educators will gain knowledge of the specific health needs and issues faced by local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people within the local community. This program can be adapted to meet the needs of the local community.

If you are not sure about how to locate a suitable local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander guest speaker, you could seek help from any of the following:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker at a Community Health Centre in your area
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisation
- Indigenous Schooling Support Unit
- Regional Office - Education
- Community Education Counsellor
- Indigenous Education Worker (teachers/teacher aides)
- Community Partnerships Officer or
- Indigenous Liaison Officer
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents.

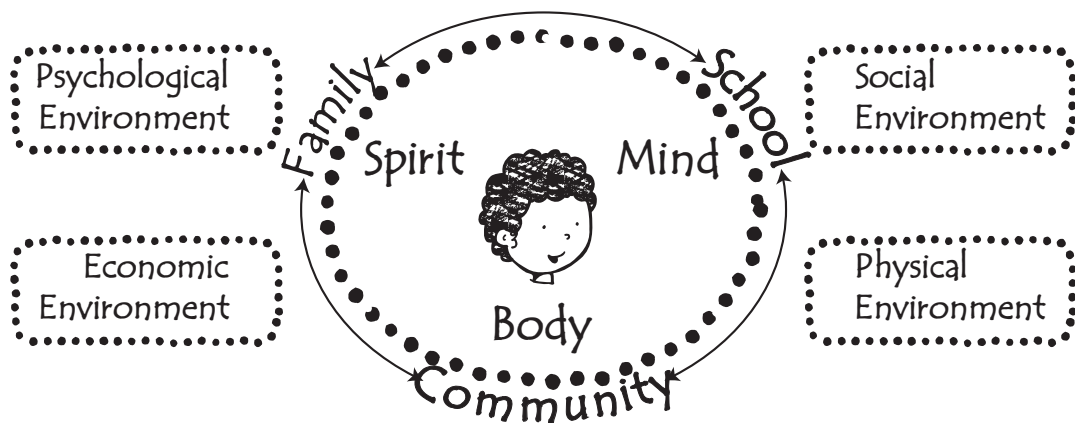
Ensure your introduction of the guest speaker to the students highlights the respect that the Elder commands in the community. See the Queensland Studies Authority document, *'Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest speakers'*, which describes appropriate protocols, cultural understandings and processes when engaging an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander guest speaker in a variety of settings:

www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/approach/indigenous_g009_0712.pdf

How does this program fit into the Health Promoting Schools Framework?

A 'health promoting school' is a school community that takes action and places priority on creating environments that will have the best possible impact on the health of students, teachers and other school staff. It recognises the broad range of interconnected factors influencing our health. The three main aspects to a health promoting school are:

- curriculum, teaching and learning
- school atmosphere
- school, family, community interactions, relationships and partnerships.



Adapted from Hancock and Perkins 1985

Healthy jarjums make healthy food choices addresses the formal curriculum by providing lesson plans and activities in which children can participate. School, family and community are addressed by including local Indigenous services in the delivery of the program and the invitation of parents to participate in the program. Finally, the program addresses some aspects of school atmosphere, but it is recommended that the school environment is examined more thoroughly while this program is taught, eg. the tuckshop, providing shade and/or plenty of drink taps.

What resources are available? How do I get access to them?

The availability and access to culturally relevant information and resources has grown considerably in recent years. Such materials are available at Indigenous Schooling Support Units throughout Australia. These units provide materials such as books, DVDs, kits, posters, pamphlets, music and artefacts. Community organisations and health services can provide information, booklets and pamphlets concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. Furthermore, educators can also contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and parents within their local community, Indigenous health workers, community workers and Indigenous educators to gain knowledge of and access to local information and existing programs. Some organisations providing resources are listed in Section 7 at the end of this manual.

What will students learn as a result of participating in *Healthy jarjums make healthy food choices*?

This program is designed for all students to work towards demonstrating the essential learnings in the Queensland School Curriculum Health and Physical Education Key Learning Area and the other Key Learning Areas.

More specifically, students will learn about and practise skills related to nutrition and the relationships between food, growth and development and health including:

- The 'Food Star'
- The importance of eating
- Food hygiene and safety
- Food preparation
- Food functions
- Indigenous food-related practices eg. collection, preparation and cooking methods and lore.
- Indigenous values, customs and language
- Senses
- Personal hygiene
- Eating practices
- Choosing nutritious food

Terminology

Learning activities in this module involve the use of the following terms:

Aboriginal, bush tucker, cassava, celebration, corroboree, culture, Dreaming, dugong, energy, European, everyday foods, exercise, family, food groups ('Food Star'), food preparation, germs, growth, health, hunting and gathering, hygiene, Indigenous, kup mari, leached, meals, muscles, nutrition, proteins, taro, Torres Strait Islander, totem, traditional practices, safety, senses, shellfish, social customs, sometimes foods, sorbie, turtle, vitamins and minerals, yam, wongai.

School Authority Policies

Teachers are required to be aware of, and observe, school authority policies that may be relevant to this unit of work. These include policies relating to food selection, preparation and handling (eg. food allergies).

Social Justice

Healthy jarjums make healthy food choices provides opportunities for all students to increase their understanding and appreciation of diversity and supportive environments. It includes activities that encourage students to:

- recognise and value the social and cultural diversity within their local community, with specific reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- respect and appreciate the difference and diversity amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island societies and within the wider community
- demonstrate sensitivity and concern for others
- work harmoniously and collectively.