

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



Friday, 14 March 2025

SUPPORTING HEALTHY HABITS FOR VICTORIAN FAMILIES

The Allan Labor Government is helping more young Victorians and their families to lead active, healthy lifestyles – supporting local organisations to address health inequities in communities right across the state.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Kyneton High School – who is benefiting from an initiative run by one of 84 successful recipients of the \$4.87 million VicHealth *Growing Healthy Communities Grants* program.

Established to ensure every child and young person has the resources they need to be healthy; the program offers grants up to \$150,000 to schools, local sport clubs and other organisations for educational and fitness programs.

Specifically, it recognises the barriers to good health can be more significant for young people aged up to 25 years, based on their gender, sexuality, socio-economic or cultural background, or because they live in a regional area.

At Kyneton High School, Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health (SCCH) has received a grant to upgrade the school's kitchen garden – encouraging students to get involved with growing, harvesting, preparing, cooking and sharing fresh, seasonal food.

The grant will allow over 200 students to participate and will see them create an orchard, an edible food forest and construct a new pizza oven and bench-seating, students will learn the basics of healthy growing, cooking and eating right alongside their classmates and friends.

The project will help the broader community through the establishment of annual cash crops of garlic, daffodil bulbs and cut flowers at Kyneton's annual festival.

It also complements and supports the SCCH-led Community Meals Cook Up program which sees Kyneton High School students develop cooking skills and distribute nutritious meals to Kyneton Community House for individuals experiencing food insecurity.

This Growing Healthy Communities Grants program aligns with the Labor Government's *Healthy kids, healthy futures* five-year child health and wellbeing action plan goals to create supportive environments for healthy eating, active living and wellbeing.

For more information, please visit vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding/growing-healthy-communities-grants.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health and Member for Macedon Mary-Anne Thomas

"Every young Victorian should have access to the resources they need to lead a happy and healthy life – this grants program is so important, helping break down barriers to good health."

"We know that a lifetime of healthy habits, such as eating and cooking, begin at a young age – by supporting dozens of projects like this kitchen garden program at Kyneton High School, we can help kids stay on the right track."