

Chatswood Hills State School



A change in culture for the Chatty community

When commencing Pick of the Crop in 2021, Chatswood Hills State School had a vision to improve student knowledge and understanding of healthy food choices. The level of enthusiasm students have shown for the program meant this vision is coming to light, changing the way kids are thinking and learning about food.

Making a Vision a Reality

Chatswood Hills State School (known as Chatty to locals) first priority when joining Pick of the Crop, was to give their existing gardens some much needed love.

- The Environmental Rangers, a group of keen students and teachers, got together to talk about sustainability and the best way to create the garden.
- Students from across the school were involved in the whole process, from deciding where to best position the garden beds to what should be grown. A range of vegetables, fruit and Indigenous bush tucker plants were planted with input from Chatty's Indigenous students.
- The garden was strategically positioned in the middle of the school with students encouraged to roam the gardens as they wish.

Erin, Inclusive Education Teacher, Environmental Ranger and Pick of the Crop Champion highlights the exposure and active involvement has positively impacted the students' attitudes.

"We have seen a huge increase in engagement around gardening, students are consistently asking how they can be involved and when they can help in the garden... students are actively seeking out the veggie gardens during break times, to check on the plants and eat anything that's ready!"



From Garden to Plate

For those not roaming the garden, the garden has been brought to them. Last year, the first Chatty Fresh Food Market was held to showcase the range of delicious vegetables and fruit that was grown by students.

- Produce was harvested, with both raw and hot dishes prepared for the school community to try.
- Carrot, lettuce, cucumber, mint, strawberries, capsicum and cherry tomatoes were offered raw, and cooked garlic snap peas, zucchini chips, corn on the cob, onion and roasted eggplant also available for students to try.
- The event was so successful that it will continue annually with the aim of inviting parents along.

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Parent and carer connections

Chatty sees this Pick of the Crop component as an important aspect of creating healthy habits, so they are engaging parents and carers in different ways. Fortnightly newsletter articles are created and shared to keep parents informed about nutrition, food and healthy habits.

Student Led Innovation

As the benefits of Pick of the Crop gain recognition, the popularity of activities has continued to increase across the school:

- Students have started to independently research gardening tips to bring ideas to teachers and fellow students. These dedicated students have researched innovative ways to create sustainable gardens, such as creating edible walls in classrooms.
- More teachers are engaging with the program, using curriculum as a way of bringing healthy eating and growing into their classrooms.

Creating a Sustainable Future

Erin is confident that activities will continue: *"We are building our veggie crew with teachers and our students are quite invested!" "We have had great, positive feedback from students, parents and teachers around the Pick of the Crop Program. We believe it is well on its way to becoming embedded in our daily life here at Chatty."*

The flexibility of Pick of the Crop has meant Chatty have created a program that is not only relevant to their school community but one that the whole school can get involved in for years to come.

For more information on Pick of the Crop, see www.hw.qld.gov.au/pick-of-the-crop.

How Chatswood Hills are integrating Pick of the Crop into the Curriculum



Chatswood Hills State School students

Prep: A sensory garden was created in the prep playground. The Pick of the Crop funding was used to purchase a variety of aromatic plants including lavender, rosemary, coriander and mint. The students will be able to walk along the garden path smelling and tasting all the herbs.

Year 1 Science unit - *how different places meet the need of living things.* The class planted veggie seeds, and then cared for them ensuring the plants received the 4 needs of living things - sunshine, fresh air, food and water.

Year 3 Technologies unit - *students are tasked with designing and creating a healthy wrap or sandwich.* The students are able to explore the Chatty gardens, record what fresh vegetables are available and use that when designing their yummy creation.

Year 4 Science unit - *how natural processes and human activity cause changes to the Earth's surfaces.* The class identified an erosion problem near their classroom, caused by both rainwater and students running up and down a hill. They decided that by putting some raised garden beds at the top of the hill, students would be discouraged from taking that path and the gardens would receive plenty of water from the rainwater pathway. As an added bonus, the class then planted fruit and vegetable plants in the garden beds to care for and eat.