

School Information Pack

Version 2

2025

www.hw.qld.gov.au/pick-of-the-crop

A program developed by

health+wellbeing
Queensland

An initiative of



Queensland
Government

Pick of the Crop is a flexible healthy eating initiative that offers support, funding, resources and networking for Prep-year 6 Queensland schools.

If you are...

- Keen to plan suitable activities for boosting awareness and uptake of veggies and fruit in school
- Passionate about the benefits of food and nutrition for your students
- Keen to support a whole school approach to student health and wellbeing through food and nutrition
- Eager to broaden learning opportunities that promote healthy food and drink choices

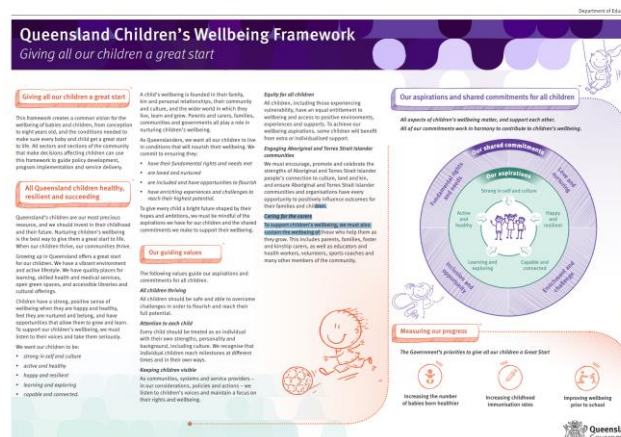


...this initiative is for you



What?

- Pick of the Crop is a whole school healthy eating initiative with the aim to increase Queensland children's vegetable and fruit intake. It was launched in 2020, with over 200 schools participating in the initiative since then.
- It is flexible – your school designs actions based on local needs across different components, with support from a local regional coordinator and funding available in the first two years of implementation.
- It is consistent with:
 - Department of Education's *Equity and Excellence* plan, particularly around wellbeing and engagement and the *Queensland Children's Wellbeing Framework* (an action within the Qld Government *Early Years Plan*).
 - *Smart Choices – Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Qld schools*, which is all about offering healthy food and drink choices to students in Queensland schools across the whole school.
 - *Making Healthy Happen 2032* – a whole of government strategy for preventing obesity in Queensland.



Why?

Food and drink intake of children do not meet recommendations

3.2% of 5 to 11-year-olds eat sufficient vegetables, with 21% consuming 3 serves or more per day*



80.5 % of 5 to 11-year-olds eat sufficient fruit per day*



39% total energy intake of 4 to 8-year-old males and 36% of females comes from unhealthy food and drinks**



Healthy eating supports optimal growth and development in children, enables successful learning at school, performance at sport and can protect from common physical and mental health issues.



* Source: Queensland Government. Queensland survey analytic system (QSAS), <https://www.choreport.health.qld.gov.au/our-lifestyle/diet>

** Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. AIHW 2018. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/food-nutrition/diet#guidelines>

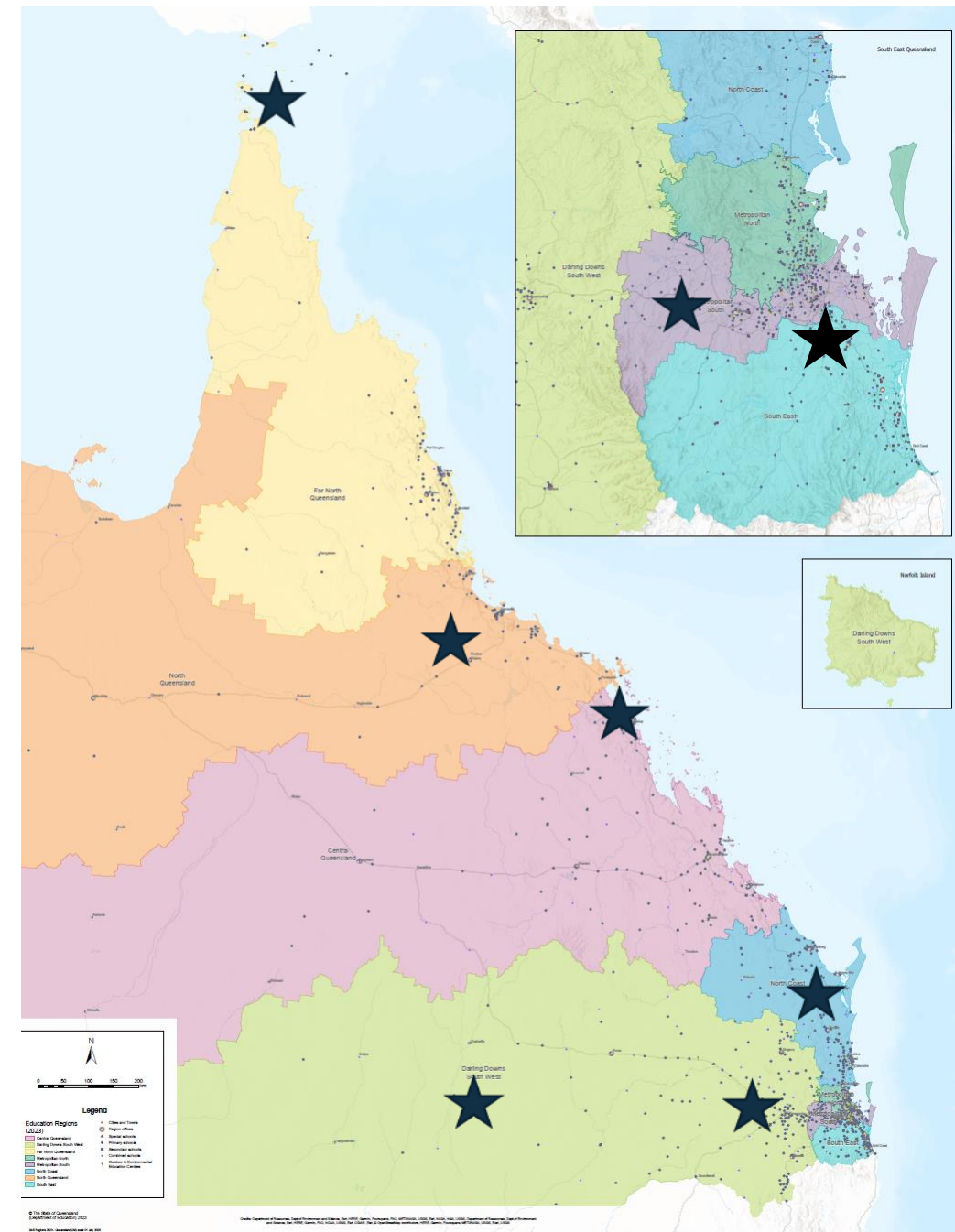
Who?

Pick of the Crop is for Queensland state schools

Where?

Schools in the following Department of Education regions can participate in Pick of the Crop:

- **North Queensland** (including Bowen, the Burdekin, Townsville)
- **Central Queensland** (Mackay LGA only)
- **North Coast** (including Bundaberg, Fraser Coast, Maryborough, Gympie and Sunshine Coast)
- **South East** (including Logan)
- **Metropolitan South** (including Redlands and Ipswich)
- **Darling Downs South West** (including Toowoomba, Southern Downs, South Burnett, Dalby and Roma)
- **Far North Queensland** (including Torres Strait and Cook Shire)



How? – view the videos for how Pick of the Crop works in schools

HWQld Pick of the Crop

<https://youtu.be/HL9dVo3LhPk>



Eat the Alphabet (Bundaberg schools)

<https://youtu.be/X0vh-RZbdL0>



Rollingstone State School

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_dNGq6LZCU



Events held as part of Pick of the Crop

<https://youtu.be/xXMdcF0qsTY>



Townsville West State School

<https://youtu.be/XdFzfhfCYWLQ>



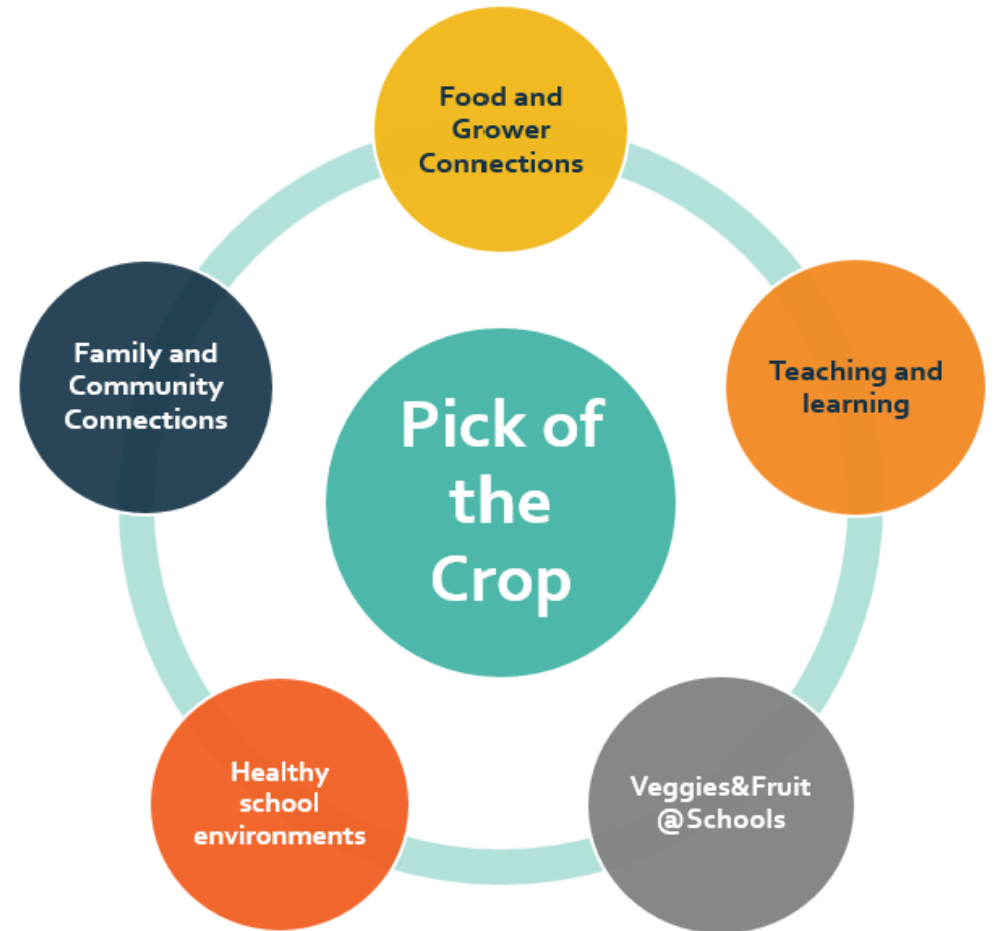


“What worked much better in our school were those opportunities that teachers found to weave in fruit and vegetable content to the curriculum and ways to align content with units as opposed to adding on additional content”

Pick of the Crop in action

Pick of the Crop – the Details

- ✓ Evidence-based initiative. In its 5th year of implementation in Queensland
- ✓ Whole school multi-strategy approach to healthy eating
- ✓ School-led actions, which focus on the five *Pick of the Crop* components
- ✓ Builds on school strengths and current actions
- ✓ Boost funding available in year 1 and 2 of the program (on approval of an application, including a school action plan, via SmartyGrants by 19 September 2025)
- ✓ Support by a regional coordinator





Component	Food and Grower Connections	Teaching and Learning	Veggies & Fruit @ School	Healthy School Environments	Family and Community Connections
<p>Outline</p>	<p>Connect with local farmers and/or producers through incursions or school excursions</p> <p>Integrating paddock to plate messaging during classroom teaching and learning</p>	<p>Embed food, nutrition and agriculture across key learning areas</p> <p>Implement an evidence-based curriculum-aligned food, nutrition and agriculture program(s)</p> <p>Increase teacher food and nutrition knowledge through professional development opportunities</p>	<p>Healthy Snack opportunities increased during the day e.g. promote or start veggie and fruit snacks across the whole school</p> <p>Enhance breakfast clubs with more veggies and fruit</p> <p>Enable Emergency Lunch Programs to include fruit and veggies</p>	<p>Reinforce school-wide positive food culture through connections with school gardens, fundraising and events</p> <p>Consider provision of healthy food and drink options in the school tuckshop</p>	<p>Encourage healthy options at home by communicating and connecting with parents, carers and families</p> <p>Support healthier lunchboxes through education or information sessions</p>
<p>Examples of actions that could be implemented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm visits • Farmer in the classroom • Social media supporting local farmers • Farmer forums • Source other programs that connect students with agriculture • Support National Ag Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development for teachers • Implement existing evidence-based programs • Fund Teachers Relief Scheme to support professional development or planning days to embed health, food and nutrition into classroom work • Network with other teachers or school staff • Resources e.g. books, to support teaching in class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote whole school brain breaks • Ensure all students have veggies or fruit for brain breaks • Tuckshop supplies (related to veggies and fruit only) • Fruit and veg boxes • Connect school garden with breakfast club or source donations for veggies and/or fruit • Termly social media posts on veggies or fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake classroom cooking and tasting sessions • Boost or develop a school garden • Review and update the tuckshop menu • Review school policies and plans to support healthy eating • Participate in Qld Tuckshop Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with pre-prep or playgroups • Include messaging in transition to school days • Enhance food and nutrition learning in community-led groups • Work with parent organisations to support activities • Social media and newsletter articles • Healthy fundraising

What you receive as part of Pick of the Crop

Support from a regional coordinator

(by school visits; online; email and/or phone)

Boost funding
(maximum of \$5,000 + GST for 1st year participation*)

Certificate of Participation
(when you join)

School signs
(for the school fence or garden)
- year 1 schools only

Resource bag
(includes seeds, gardening factsheets, recipes and more)

Access to a Closed Facebook Group
(limited to Pick of the Crop schools only)

Termly eNewsletters and updates
(from regional coordinators)

Networking meetings, promotions and events
(held in your region with other schools)

Access to extra resources
([online](#) and on a Pick of the Crop vault - link from your regional coordinator)



* \$2,000 + GST for 2nd year participation, subject to available funding





**Boost
funding
– criteria**

Eligible expenses:

- * Actions related to the five Pick of the Crop components
- * Supports student learning and intake of veggies and fruit
- * Maximum of:
 - * \$3,000 on school gardens or 1 component in year 1 (\$1500 maximum in year 2)
 - * 2 days TRS for planning or professional development (related to Pick of the Crop)
 - * \$1,000 allocated for transport for excursions
 - * \$2,000 for one program

Ineligible expenses:

- * Salaries / wages for school staff
- * Large infrastructure or equipment e.g. kitchen refurbishments, ovens, dishwashers, Thermomix
- * Excursions or incursions not related to veggies or fruit (e.g. dairy, beef or cane)
- * Chicken-related expenses
- * Routine supply of fresh veggies and fruit (unless a Try it Day or supplementary supply until gardens produce enough – maximum \$500)
- * Actions or excursions not related to veggies or fruit

In-kind support or other funding can be included in the school action plan.



Steps to participating in Pick of the Crop



Check out www.hw.qld.gov.au/pick-of-the-crop/. **Contact your regional coordinator** to discuss the initiative in more detail (or email pickofthecrop@hw.qld.gov.au).



Consult school staff and gain commitment from your **school leadership** team



Nominate one or more **school champions**



Plan a **school action plan** in consultation with the school community and your regional coordinator



Enter and submit your school action plan through SmartyGrants



Implement your School Action Plan with support from your regional coordinator



Complete a **Term 4 Review Survey and reporting** for HWQld



Quotes from Pick of the Crop evaluation

'Have loved the program and the wellbeing perspective it has provided kids at school. Having the funding to allow them to experience growing their own produce has been brilliant.'
(Year 1 school)

[Regional coordinator] has been instrumental in improving our practise by suggesting terrific ideas to integrate additional learning opportunities. (Year 1 school)

The school shares kitchen and garden activities and recipes using ingredients from our garden on social media for parents and community members.
(Year 2 school)

'Every week in Term 3, the prep students would learn and eat an interesting fruit during the health lesson. I was thrilled to hear from the prep teachers that some students who rarely ate fruit started to bring in these 'interesting fruit' over the next few weeks for lunch. We had some positive feedback from prep parents after these activities.' (Year 1 school)

It has been so positive for our school but also for building relationships with local farmers and suppliers.
(Year 2 school)

'Prep students expanding their persistence in trying new healthy foods.' (Year 1 school)

Prep and Year 5 Design Technology Units. Growing veggies, using worm farms, learning about systematic solutions to growing, learning about recycling green waste using recycling organisms. Food and nutrition components that looked at what was actually in fresh fruit and veggies and how it is used by the body to regenerate cells, as fuel for immune system, etc.
(Year 2 school)

'One student and her brother, who are heavily involved in our garden, have started eating vegetables at home because of vegetables introduced to them through our school garden. They now bring cucumbers and carrots to fruit snack every day.' (Year 2 school)

'To enable children to better understand the benefits of and enjoy fruit and vegetables.'
(School action plan)

We have had a review of our tuckshop menu to include more items out of our garden and to adjust the menu as we produce different produce. (Year 1 school)





Examples from North Queensland - Bowen and the Burdekin



Examples from the North Coast – from Bundaberg to Wide Bay to Gympie to the Sunshine Coast



Examples from the South East and Metropolitan South





Examples from Darling Downs – Toowoomba, Southern Downs and South Burnett



What now?

Speak with the regional coordinator for more information and start planning your participation in Pick of the Crop.

You can also contact Health and Wellbeing Queensland at: pickofthecrop@hw.qld.gov.au

