



FORM BEST PRACTICES CONTEST

Municipality: Alexandrina Council / Cittaslow Goolwa - Australia

County: Australia

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Name project

PLANT N MUNCH – SCHOOL PLANTER BOX PROJECT (CITTASLOW GOOLWA & ALEXANDRINA COUNCIL – AUSTRALIA)

Category Certification Criteria

- Energy and environmental policies (politiche energetiche e ambientali);
- Infrastructure policies (politiche infrastrutturali);
- Quality of urban life policies (politiche per la qualita' urbana);
- Agricultural, touristic and artisan policies (politiche agricole, turistiche, artigianali);
- Policies for hospitality, awareness and training (politiche per l'ospitalita, la consapevolezza e la formazione);
- Social cohesion (coesione sociale).

Summary project



PLANT N MUNCH

SCHOOL PLANTER BOX PROJECT

Plant N Munch has been run in two Alexandrina schools in 2013, with outstanding results. Plant N Munch is a program developed in collaboration between Cittaslow





Goolwa and Alexandrina Council's OPAL program.

CONCEPT: To give children an opportunity to take home a planter box and grow their own vegetables and eat them!

OPAL supplies the planter boxes, soil, seeds and seedlings – Cittaslow when able also assists with seedling supply.

*OPAL staff and Cittaslow volunteers attend the school and assist the children with planting. *Soil is already in the boxes – this is to minimise the risk of children handling the soil.*

Children are also given advice on how to look after their vegetables. This is a really engaging and interactive exercise – children really enjoy “digging” in their planter boxes and spreading the seeds. They are “wowed” that they get to take them home.

We use fast growing vegetables – eg. Radishes, lettuces

Why we want the planter boxes to go home? We want to engage the whole family and the planter box may be the first step to encouraging families to grow their own vegetables at home. Also an interesting exercise in that, some parents will be surprised at how engaged their children are with a hands on project like this.

The planter boxes are about 5kg's and do need an adult to lift – hence an adult must collect child from school and get the planter box home. Schools send notes home with the students to advise of when the day of planting will be and where their child's planter box can be collected from. Children can bring their own planting equipment in and if parents want children to wear gardening gloves for planting, then parents are asked to supply these for children on the day of planting.

To provide an ending to the program – we return to the school around the time the vegetables are ready to be 'eaten' and do a tasting session. (We are very keen to promote local food, the session may simply be getting children to try and comment on a variety of local foods and talk about how they can be prepared). We also provide children with some additional seeds to take home and plant in their planter boxes.



Report from one of the schools Plant N Munch has been to!

Most of the children grew something –

- they were excited to see their radishes pop though and quite a few of the children ate*



their radishes – they reported they were “hot” “spicy”

- *some parents used the radishes in curry’s and salads*
- *many children ate lettuce leaves and reported they tasted very nice*
- *one child mentioned that a parent had put the planter box in the garden and they had grown “more” vegies around it in the garden*

Children did learn about growing –

- *Many comments about vegies not growing – the reasoning behind this was discussed eg. Water, sunlight*
- *Many comments about snails – we talked about parents perhaps having to assist with snail bait*
- *Comments about too many radishes growing too closely together – we talked about thinning out*

Very impressed with children’s knowledge as to “why it is beneficial to grow their own vegetables at home”

- *keep you healthy and fit, cost, organic, sustainable, supporting local business, better tasting, teaches you to look after something (like a pet!). OPAL aims to promote LOCAL FOOD and hence we did talk about importing vegetables versus our local produce.*
- *All the children enjoyed having their planter box. Hopefully they can continue to use at home.*

Children were keen to grow their next lot of seeds – and “surprisingly” excited about growing broccoli.

Goal project

Motivate and inspire children to grow their own produce at home

Result project

This project has been so successful that it is being repeated in Goolwa schools this year. 160 children took home planter boxes last year and its expected that the same number will this year. One outcome that does resonate was a child stating that his family had actually put the planter box in the middle of their garden and then had proceeded to plant more vegetables around the planter box. This is a fantastic outcome, the planter box itself has been a “call to action” for some families!

Finance (costs and benefits)

Alexandrina Council funds material aspects of the program this includes: soil, seedlings, planter boxes – it is a very cost effective program – it costs Council approximately \$5 per child. The OPAL program also assists in liaison with the schools – hence making the transition for volunteers seamless.

Staff (time use and saving)

Another very positive outcome of this project is the collaborative work between Alexandrina



Council and Cittaslow Goolwa. Alexandrina Council provides 2 staff from the OPAL program and Cittaslow Goolwa provides 2 of its volunteers at each planter box lesson. To give the children a “hands-on” planting experience, it is wonderful to have so many staff available. The Goolwa Cittaslow staff are very experienced and passionate about local produce and growing at home. The Cittaslow volunteer interaction with the school children provides a wonderful way to educate local children by people who really do care about food and the environment. Without having Cittaslow involvement, this project would not have achieved the outcomes it has.

Additional information (if necessarily)

Cittaslow Goolwa and Alexandrina Council’s OPAL program share many similar philosophies and hence a partnership was born.

OPAL (Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle) works within the local community to positively change attitudes and behaviours about healthy eating and physical activity.

OPAL evolved with the French program called EPODE (translates as ‘together we can prevent childhood obesity). The EPODE program showed that a whole of community approach can have a major impact on turning around childhood obesity.

With one in five 4-year old children in South Australia overweight or obese, there was a need to build on the European success story.

Obesity is not just an issue for the individual – it is a complex community problem and so change needs to be come from a multi-layered community approach. Hence, the importance of partnerships with like minded organisations such as Cittaslow Goolwa.

A further example of Cittaslow Goolwa involvement with the Alexandrina Council is highlighted below. Cittaslow volunteers potted 100 lettuces with local children at this event. Again it was just a wonderful opportunity for the passionate Cittaslow volunteers to spread their knowledge through our whole community.



Life looks brighter outside

Opal

Free Community Event for Children and Families

Wednesday April 23rd, 9:30am – 11:30am

Arthur Neighbour Reserve
Cnr Dawson and Porter St, Goolwa

- Australia's **LARGEST** inflatable slide – **THE TITANIC**
- Treasure hunt with **GIGANTIC** sand pit
- Kite making
- Sports activities
- Pot a plant with Cittaslow
- Try corn on the BBQ with South Coast Dietitian Services
- Reading with the story fairy

For more information contact
Alexandrina Council 8555 7000

*Event subject to weather, this event will be cancelled if there is any wet or any other severe weather conditions, phone 8555 7000 or go to www.alexandrina.sa.gov.au

Link website www.alexandrina.sa.gov.au

(if available)

Once filled in this form please send it to: m.zedda@censis.it , s.sampaolo@censis.it
and info@cittaslow.net