



RESPOND Wangaratta: Children’s Mobile Art Bus Workshops

A case study
Health Promotion
Gateway Health

<p>Aim</p>	<p>To support, encourage and promote the sourcing of recycled materials and develop workshops for children that place an emphasis on creative reuse and fostering a sense of imagination. The aim is to show children us that opportunities for art-play or nature-play are all around us.</p> <p>‘It is so beautiful seeing what the kids come up with when offered some inviting “treasures” to work with’</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	<p>RESPOND is a shared community approach to healthy children. This project is one of many community-led projects developed to support children’s health and wellbeing that came out of the RESPOND Community Workshops hosted throughout 2023.</p>
<p>Partnerships</p>	<p>Bunnings Wangaratta, Activities Officer, Jane Francis Executive Officer, Pangerang Community Hub, Tennille Hall Project Officer, Pangerang Community Hub, Emma Gerrett Workshop Facilitator, MendMakeGrow, Jess Young Health Promotion Coordinators, Gateway Health, Felicity Kennedy, Clare Schultz</p>
<p>Links to local policy / initiatives</p>	<p>Rural City of Wangaratta Council Plan 2021-2025, Rural City of Wangaratta Draft Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy, Community Health, Health Promotion Plan, Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures, RESPOND-Regional-Report-2019-2022</p>
<p>Resources</p>	<p>Systems Thinking in Community Knowledge Exchange (STICKE), Partnership group members, Workshop facilitator and support staff, Pangerang Mobile Community Hub, Recovered materials, School staff and students</p>
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Four workshops were held in Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) settings at schools within the Rural City of Wangaratta. Here, children had the opportunity to get creative using recycled materials to foster their sense of imagination and social connection to support their health and wellbeing.</p>

Objectives

This project was developed as part of the RESPOND (Reflexive Evidence and Systems interventions to Prevent Obesity and Non-communicable Disease) Wangaratta research project. RESPOND is a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funded Partnership Project Grant delivered between 2018 and 2023. Deakin University is behind RESPOND as the funded research body and is supporting a local Partnership Group, made up of representatives from Gateway Health, Rural City of Wangaratta and Northeast Health Wangaratta, to deliver it. The project has been delivered in many areas of North East Victoria, and provides the opportunity for community members and organisations to work together to support local children's health and wellbeing. In Wangaratta, local factors influencing childhood health and wellbeing were identified and explored throughout three community workshops held in March, May and June 2023. Based on information gathered, action ideas were developed and led by the community, with support from partner organisations.

One action idea put forward and prioritised highly by workshop participants were children's mobile art bus workshops. The idea went ahead and involved a partnership between Bunnings Wangaratta, Pangerang Community Hub, MendMakeGrow and Gateway Health to develop workshops with the aim of addressing family factors identified in RESPOND workshops to influence children's health and wellbeing, such as cost of living, social connections, geographical isolation and family support. OSHC settings, in rural areas of the shire, were the chosen setting for this project, in order to address these factors. Diverse activities were offered in the workshops and were based on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths (STEAM) and were designed to build confidence, problem solving and fine motor skills through making creations with repurposed, everyday materials that were considered "waste" from local businesses highlighting the focus on the found materials, recycling and using what is around us to unlock the hidden potential of "waste".

Pangerang Community Hub received funding from the Australian Government Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program to purchase and fit out a Mobile Community Hub (a neighbourhood house on wheels) to support recovery and resilience of communities impacted by the 2019/20 bushfires. As well as increasing awareness of the mobile unit and the supports available for future disasters, Pangerang aimed to offer a range of engaging activities for younger people and their families, the RESPOND Mobile Art Bus project provided a perfect collaboration opportunity.

A community member, Jess Young of MendMakeGrow, who came up with the idea at RESPOND workshop had the skills to be Workshop Facilitator and her position to run the group was funded by Pangerang Community Hub. Jess came up with the idea to replicate a similar project to the Rube Goldberg model shown in the Ok Go! film clip which the children loved!



Bunnings Wangaratta have played a crucial role in recovering and housing recycled materials and creating connections with the schools to offer the workshops. Materials were also provided by Whitlands Engineering and Bill Young Studio. These materials, if not donated, would have gone in the bin.

Gateway Health supported development of the partnership group and delivery of the workshops. Gateway Health met with the Rural City of Wangaratta after the development of their Draft Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy, this project was found to align strongly with the effective waste management, resource recovery, and circular economy focal points of this strategy and the council are happy to support where possible, leading to future sustainability of the project.

What did we achieve?

The partnership group worked together to develop content ideas, source materials and host the workshops. These were held in small rural areas and so were more accessible for geographically isolated communities, they were well attended and students were shown to be creatively reusing recycled materials in unique ways.

Lessons learnt and next steps

The benefits of community-led projects are immense, they allow people to participate in, and feel ownership for, the development of their own ideas, which are therefore more likely to be successful. This project was a success due to the partnerships that sat behind it, the alignment across organisations and the passion and dedication of the people involved. Feedback from one Outside School Hours Coordinator when asked about the project, was that the children at the school were asking when they would be doing it again, her phone was had lots of photos from the day and that it was an amazing activity offered for the setting in which she works, her face really did light up when asked. From here, to ensure sustainability of the project, a resource kit will be developed and promoted to schools and relevant community groups.

The resource kit will include a promotional video, written manual for workshop facilitation and recycled materials for use. The partnership group have formed great relationships and will continue to work together where possible.

Gateway Health has thoroughly enjoyed working with Pangerang Community Hub, MendMakeGrow and Bunnings and would like to thank them for their valuable contribution in addressing children's health and wellbeing and would like to thank. Gateway Health looks forward to partnering with these organisations on future projects.

For more information and to stay up to date about RESPOND Wangaratta projects, please visit the [Gateway Health website](#) or get in touch at: HealthPromotion.Team@gatewayhealth.org.au.



Gateway Health also thanks:

Bunnings Wangaratta, Creative Reuse and Arty Play @mendmakegrow