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Local grants to tackle childhood obesity in south eastern Sydney

Twelve new projects are set to take action to address childhood obesity in south eastern Sydney after receiving funding from the *Healthy Children, Healthy Communities Grants* program.

Launched for the first time by South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD), the focus of the new program is to fund local initiatives that support the NSW Premier's Priority to reduce childhood overweight and obesity rates by five per cent by 2025.

Currently, more than one fifth (21.4 per cent) of children aged five to 16 years across NSW are overweight or obese. In addition, these children have an increased likelihood of being above a healthy weight in adulthood, a risk factor for developing chronic diseases including diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Data shows that nearly half (44 per cent) of adult residents (aged 16 years and over) who live in south eastern Sydney are overweight or obese.

Julie Dixon, Director, Planning Population Health and Equity, SESLHD, said grants of up to \$10,000 have been awarded to projects that aim to encourage and enable children to lead healthy and active lives.

"The *Healthy Children, Healthy Communities Grants* program recognises that communities are often best-placed to plan and develop effective solutions to improve the health and wellbeing of residents," Ms Dixon said.

"Social, environmental, family and individual factors all combine to influence a child's food intake and physical activity behaviours.

"By supporting local projects, the program will enable communities to implement actions specifically designed to support children and families in south eastern Sydney enjoy a healthy lifestyle through good nutrition, physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour."

Successful grant applicants include local public schools and Out of School Hour Centres (OSHC), as well as community organisations including childcare and youth services, community health services, YMCA NSW and Australian Red Cross Society.

"Being above a healthy weight can impact a child's physical, emotional and social wellbeing," Ms Dixon said.

"Preventative action across sectors and through community led change are key to reducing overweight and obesity in children – which has become a serious public health issue.

"By acting now, alongside health professionals, the community can help reverse increasing rates of obesity in childhood, and enhance the future health of the next generation."

SESLHD has developed a *Childhood Obesity Prevention Framework* which guides local action to reduce and prevent childhood overweight and obesity. The Framework outlines priorities for action across the health sector, local community and children's everyday settings.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/health-promotion-service>