



Information Booklet

2018



Health
Illawarra Shoalhaven
Local Health District

Introduction

- *Stir it up!* is an exciting project coordinated by the Health Promotion Service[^]
- The aim of the project is to train community members to become advocates for healthy eating. Interested volunteers from the community complete a training program and are then supported to promote healthy eating in their local communities
- Since September 2010, trained volunteers have become involved with community gardens, provided nutrition talks and cooking demonstrations at schools, pre-schools, playgroups and community organisations and have participated in a number of other community nutrition initiatives
- *Stir it up!* was inspired by the 'Community Foodies' Project in South Australia - www.communityfoodies.com



Stir it up! peer-educators 2011

[^]Part of NSW Health - Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD)

Peer-education – what is it?

Peer education is based on the principle that community members learn better from other members who are of similar age and background as themselves. *Stir it up!* uses peer-educators to promote healthy eating.

Benefits of peer-education include:

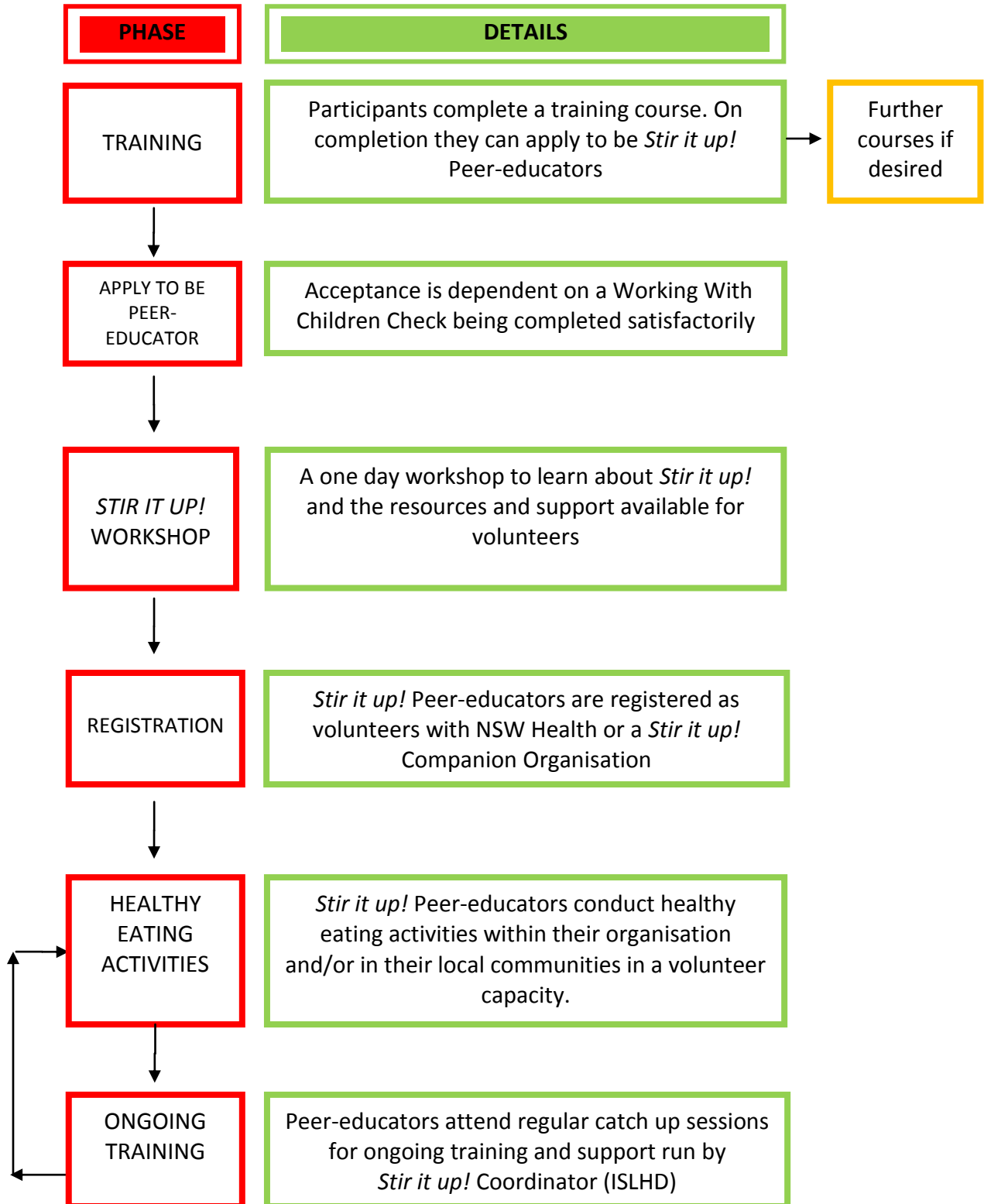
- Community members understand the environment in which the program is run and are trusted by the community
- Community members provide a link between communities and health and other support agencies
- They understand and address barriers to health and nutrition in their community
- Peers can translate health information into appropriate language
- Benefits to peers include increased employment opportunities, positive changes in diet, increased self-esteem, self-confidence and communication skills
- Benefits to agencies and organisations include extended reach of programs, increased engagement with vulnerable groups and links and networks between agencies

What is involved in the *Stir it up!* Project?

- Community members interested in food and nutrition complete a training program.
 - ✓ Part One is a ten-week course delivered by Kiama Community College. At the satisfactory completion of the course, interested people can apply to be *Stir it up!* peer-educators.
 - ✓ Part Two is a one day workshop to learn about *Stir it up!* and the resources and support available for peer-educators.
 - ✓ Peer-educators are then registered as volunteers with local health or not-for-profit organisations to promote healthy eating.
- Kiama Community College is a Registered Training Organisation - RTO ID 90087.
- The ten-week training course is called *Healthy Eating* and includes the Food Handler Certificate, nutrition basics, preparing healthy food, presentation skills, workplace health and safety and an employability skills module.
- The course includes units from the Certificate II in Hospitality. A nationally recognised Statement of Attainment is awarded for completed units. These units can be used as entry into hospitality or other training courses.



Where to from here?



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- *Stir it up!* volunteer peer-educators are involved in:
 - Food activities with schools and pre-schools
 - Healthy eating talks and activities
 - Cooking demonstrations
 - Community gardens
 - School canteens and breakfast clubs
 - Advocacy about food access and availability
 - Supermarket tours
 - Cooking groups
 - And other activities they are interested in
 - *Stir it up!* Peer-educators are encouraged to run a minimum of two presentations or activities each year.
 - *Stir it up!* volunteers are invited to attend regular continuing education every two months. These sessions are known as Catch Ups and are an opportunity for peer-educators to share experiences and learn more about healthy eating and *Stir it up!* resources.
 - Ongoing training and support is provided by the *Stir it up!* Project Coordinator.
 - *Stir it up!* peer-educators are volunteers trained in basic nutrition concepts and it is not their role to provide complex nutrition presentations or individual health or nutrition advice. People requesting advice are referred to their GP, other health professional or Accredited Practising Dietitian

The basic healthy eating messages promoted by *Stir it up!* peer-educators are:

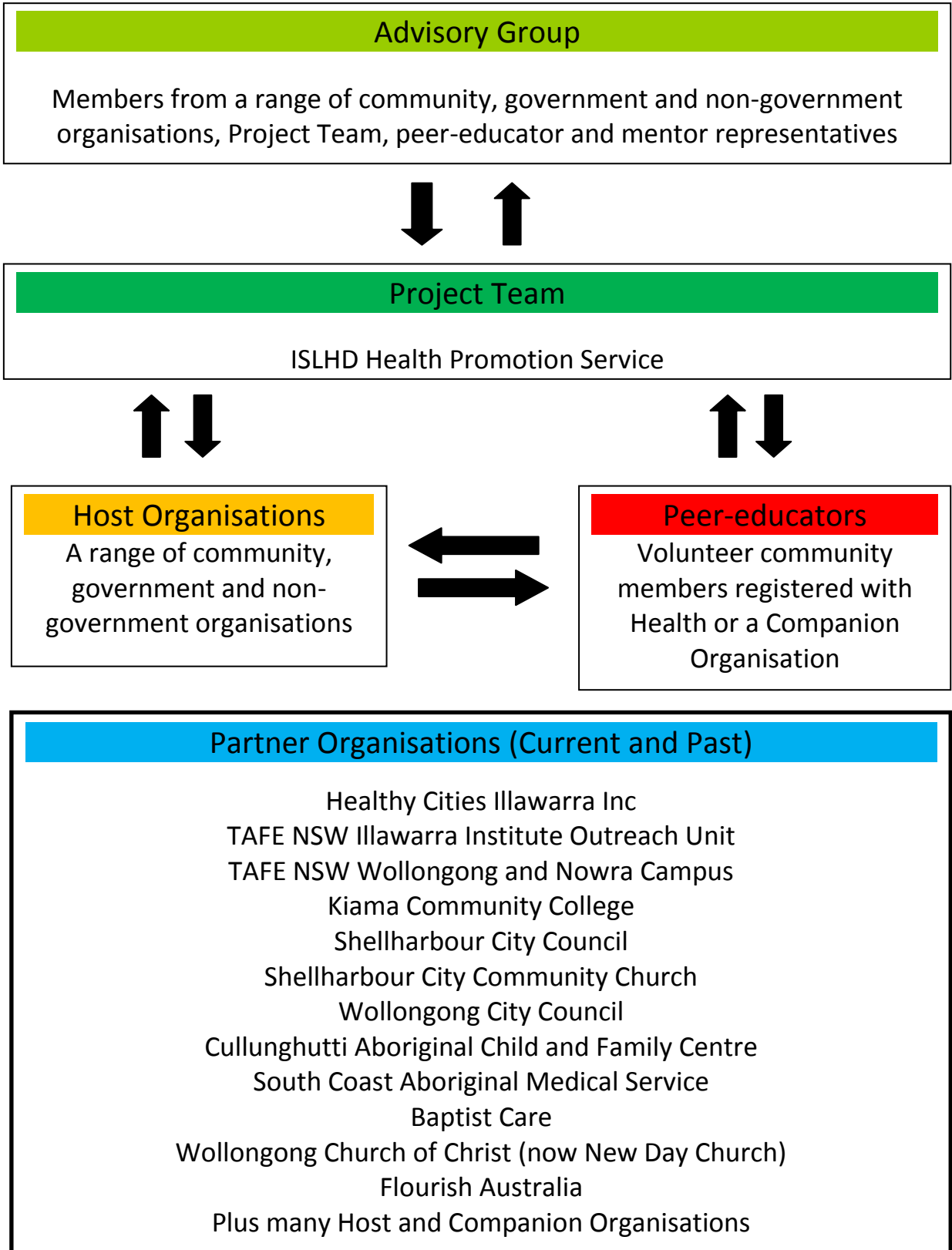
- ✓ Eat more fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Eat more freshly prepared foods and whole foods (rather than processed or fast foods)
- ✓ Eat a healthy breakfast everyday
- ✓ Drink more water

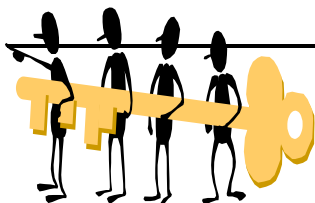


The philosophy of *Stir it up!* is:

- To underpin all strategies with healthy nutrition messages which are budget- and environmentally-conscious
- To encourage community participation in the development and implementation of the project
- To ensure that all participants feel respected and supported
- To value the community engagement, skills development and social inclusion aspects of the project as well as the nutrition education component

The Structure of *Stir it up!*





Peer-educators are the key to the *Stir it up!* project.

Peer-educators are trained volunteers who conduct healthy eating activities in their communities.

The **Advisory Group** meets quarterly. Its role is to:

- Support the development and implementation of the project
- Provide expertise and strategic direction

The **Project Team**:

- Coordinates the *Stir it up!* project
- Recruits partners, Advisory Group members and peer-educators
- Negotiates training courses in partnership with Registered Training Organisations
- Conducts ongoing training for peer-educators
- Develops project resources
- Conducts project administration including funding applications and evaluation

Host Organisations are organisations and services who request a *Stir it up!* activity. They may include welfare organisations, community groups, schools, play groups or local councils.

Companion Organisations – from 2016 local not-for-profit organisations may register and support *Stir it up!* volunteers to run healthy eating activities within their organisation

Project Partners are listed in the diagram on the previous page.

Why establish *Stir it up!* in the Illawarra region?

- Food insecurity affects 6.8% of the region's population. A key barrier to food security is a lack of food knowledge and skills, preparation and cooking facilities, financial resources and social support, especially in more vulnerable communities
- *Stir it up!* aims to improve access to nutrition information and to increase cooking knowledge and skills. Training is centred around healthy eating on a budget and environmental awareness, reducing waste, seasonality, local markets, growing locally and cooking from scratch
- *Stir it up!* provides free ongoing training for community members who will then pass on their knowledge to their peers in the community
- Outcomes for the volunteers have included an increase in self-esteem and confidence; increased sense of competence; links to education and employment and community development
- Health outcome improvements have also been seen with positive changes to individual and family eating patterns
- Host Organisations have reported an increase in the number of nutrition programs offered and increased attendance at nutrition activities



Stir it up! peer-educators,
TAFE teacher and
Project Team
22 September 2010

What is Food Security?

Food Security is “the ability of individuals, households and communities to acquire appropriate and nutritious food on a regular and reliable basis, using socially acceptable means. Food security is determined by the food supply in a community, and whether the people have adequate resources and skills to acquire and use (access) that food.”

Food Security Options Paper, NSW Health 2003

Food insecurity can mean:

- Not having enough food
- Experiencing hunger as a result of running out of food and being unable to afford more
- Eating a poor quality diet as a result of limited options
- Anxiety about acquiring food
- Having to rely on food relief

Further Information

Interested in the *Healthy Eating* course run by Kiama Community College?

Contact Kiama Community College on 02 4232 1050 or Kirsten.Lee-Archer@kcc.nsw.edu.au



Need more details about becoming a *Stir it up!* Peer-educator?

Contact the *Stir it up!* Coordinator

Robyn Tindall | 02 4221 6777 | robyn.tindall@health.nsw.gov.au

Interested in being a Host Organisation or Companion Organisation?

Contact the *Stir it up!* Coordinator

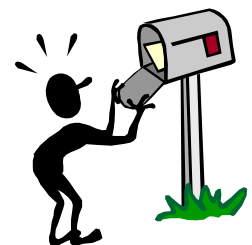
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More information about *Stir it up!* including Annual Reports and other documents, can be found at

<http://foodfairnessillawarra.org.au/projects-stories/stir-it-up/>



Host Organisations are expected to purchase any food items a peer-educator may need for a Stir it up! activity. Peer-educators are not expected to pay for any activity costs.