



RESPOND Benalla – A Summary Report August 2023

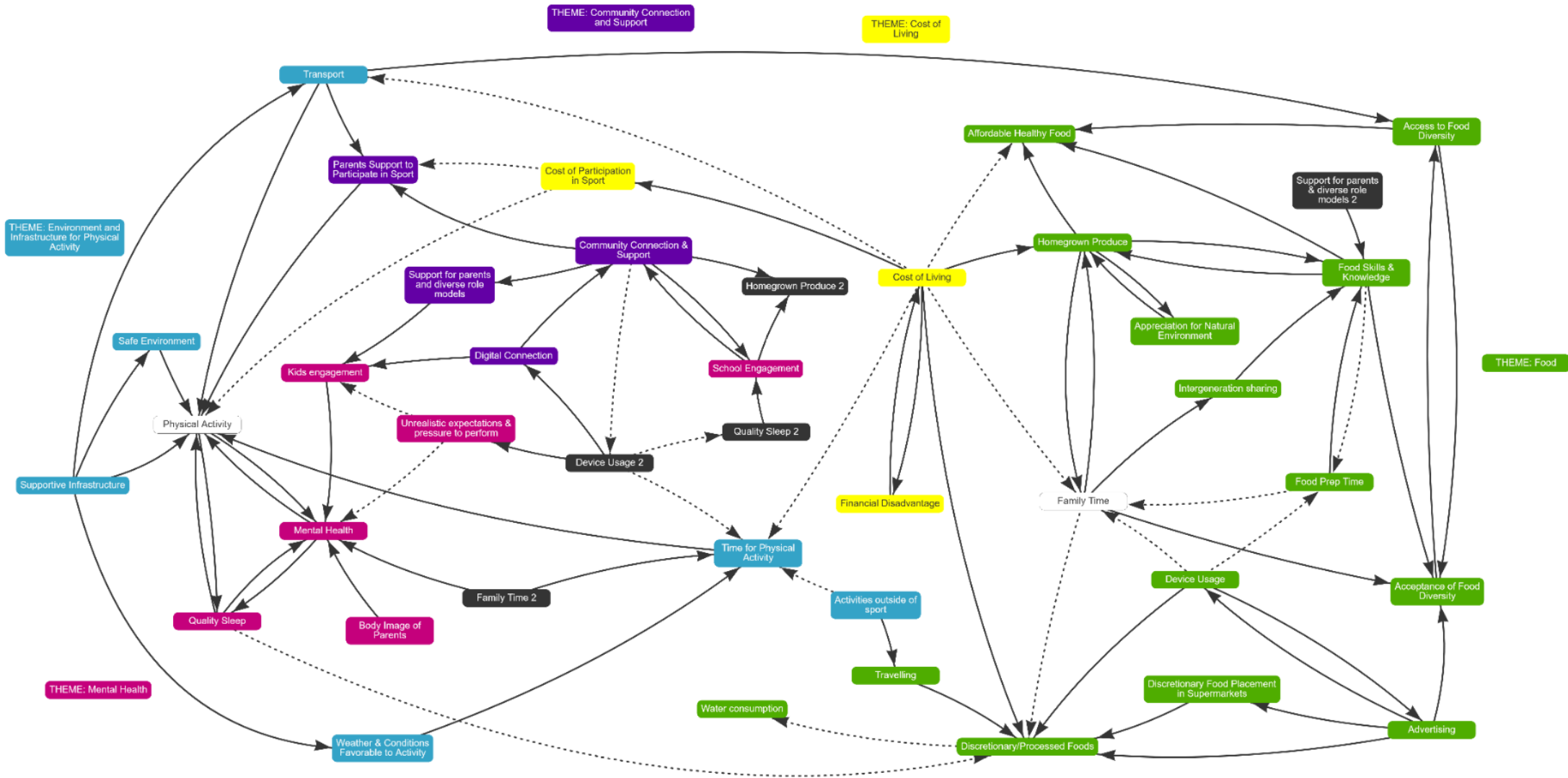
Benalla Health, Benalla Rural City Council and the Tomorrow Today have partnered to lead the Deakin RESPOND project in 2023. RESPOND is funded by the National Health Medical Research Council and is co-led by local communities and Deakin University. It has been delivered in many areas of North East Victoria. RESPOND aims to empower the Benalla community to lead actions which improve the health of children and the wider community. **The community was asked “what influences children to eat healthy and be physically active in Benalla?”.**

In February 2023, 11 staff from the partner organisations attended Systems Thinking training hosted by Deakin University. Community members and organisational representatives came together in a series of three workshops in March, May and June 2023. Local factors influencing children’s health were explored, with community led action ideas developed.

Workshop Outcomes:

- A systems map was developed in March and May to give some of the answers the question above (See Figure 1).
- 5 key themes were identified: Environment & Infrastructure for Physical Activity, Community Connection & Support, Mental Health, Cost of Living and Food.
- The June workshops identified 40 action ideas to try address some of the factors impacting children’s health.

Figure 1. Systems Map- What influences children in Benalla to eat healthy and be physically active



Solid line: both factors are increasing or decreasing.

e.g. as homegrown produce increases, food skills & knowledge also increases or as body image of parents decreases, mental health decreases.

Dotted line: one factor is increasing and the other is decreasing.

e.g. as quality sleep increases, discretionary/processed food decreases or as the cost of participation in sport decreases, physical activity increases.

Prioritising Action Ideas

Following the third workshop, all action ideas were collated into a spreadsheet. The partnership group worked together to categorise actions based on theme and priority rating that was identified on the night (See Table 1).

- Top Priority (3 stars): Actions that have high feasibility and impact.
Medium Priority (2 stars): Actions that have high feasibility/low impact or high impact/low feasibility
Low Priority (1 star): Actions that have low feasibility and impact.

Please note:

- Some action ideas cover a group of ideas as they were similar,
- Some action ideas have been categorised but are not set and can be worked on at any time,
- There may be activity already happening in the community regarding some action ideas,
- Further community engagement will take place with some community members and groups that were unable to attend the workshops.

Where To From Here

The partnership group would like to thank everyone for their support and involvement in this process. From here the partnership group will guide and support the local actions, with focus first on actions with community leads identified and interested.

For more information and to stay up to date about RESPOND Benalla, please get in touch at Dietetics@benallahealth.org.au

Table 1: Action Ideas

| Theme | Top Priority Ideas | Medium Priority Ideas | Low Priority Ideas |
|----------------|--|---|---|
| Cost of Living | | | Helping people out to see how they can manoeuvre prices, manage different bills |
| Mental Health | Health and wellbeing classes at school – support for kids, parents*# | Education of families on effects of marketing | |

| Theme | Top Priority Ideas | Medium Priority Ideas | Low Priority Ideas |
|---|---|---|--|
| Environment and Infrastructure for Physical Activity | <p>Come and Try Day for all ages*#</p> <p>Activity Buddy- promote, inform parental support to engage children in sport#</p> <p>Campaign- What does 1 hour of physical activity look like 7 days/week#</p> <p>Student driven ride/walk to school promotion</p> <p>Sports activities that teach fundamental locomotion and ball handling#</p> | <p>Walk Your Waste to Reduce Your Waist- recycling human waste to produce fertiliser*</p> <p>Building a community centre – accessible space#</p> <p>Bike path with seasonal planting#</p> <p>Restarting previous community events e.g. MND Walk</p> <p>Verge Gardens*</p> <p>Central Ideas for Sport and Participation</p> <p>Cycling at Winton Wetlands- Bush Tucker at Ed Centre Winton Wetlands</p> <p>All weather playground#</p> | <p>Develop a community bus for young people to attend sporting/community events</p> |
| Community Connection and Support | <p>Antiracism training for council</p> <p>Communication between schools and councils about strategies such as National Walk to School Week</p> | <p>Community Calendar to promote activities (including cost, transport)#</p> | <p>Reassess our economic paradigm – provide a space to discuss alternative economics e.g. doughnut economics, degrowth</p> <p>Ensure projects that council fund are checked for social, environment and economic values.</p> |

| Theme | Top Priority Ideas | Medium Priority Ideas | Low Priority Ideas |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| Food | <p>Food knowledge, skills and gap- workshops in community*</p> <p>Cooking based actions*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops - Cooking demonstrations using seasonal produce - Quick meals - identify fruit and veg - Lunchbox learning <p>Family cooking groups with community (community gardens or at homes)</p> <p>Increase number of water fill stations</p> <p>Seasonal gardens in schools with local volunteers</p> <p>Multi-cultural program- monthly choice of country someone giving cooking classes and a talk about that country#</p> <p>Community garden helping educate aspiring gardeners-</p> | <p>Come and try – food ideas day</p> <p>Home grown produce</p> <p>Healthy lunch from home challenge- promotion for students</p> <p>Olive oil pressing service (free)</p> <p>Provide Frank Green water bottles to schools</p> <p>Kitchen garden cooking program- grades 5-9 at community garden*#</p> | <p>Masterchef Benalla/Regional/international or Benalla Food and Wine Festival #</p> |

* items had a community member identify as a lead

items had a community member identify as wanting to be involved but not lead