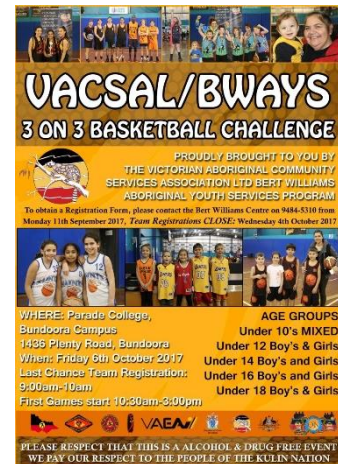


# Sugary Drinks Free and Healthy Tucker Commitments at - 3 on 3 Junior Basketball Challenge Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd  
And  
Bert Williams Aboriginal Youth Services



The Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd (VACSAL) together with Bert Williams Aboriginal Youth Services (BWAYS) have collaborated together for years to bring the Junior 3 on 3 basketball challenge to life.

The VACCHO Nutrition Team had a yarn with Leigh Saunders, managers of BWAYS about their commitment this year to a Healthy Tucker and Sugary Drinks Free Challenge.

Listen to the whole [interview here](#)



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*"We're trying to make sure that you guys' choice is easier for you to make around health because we don't have all the sugary stuff here and available."*

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As manager of BWAYS, Leigh is responsible for organizing the Junior 3 on 3 Junior Basketball Challenge, which is part of the broader Victorian NAIDOC celebrations. The Tournament started in 2008, with about 40 children and this year 140 children participated! Growing from strength to strength with the tournament, Leigh has a commitment to his Communities and families for the health and wellbeing of the mob.

Leigh talked to a lot of Community members about having a sugary drinks free event, closing the canteen and providing a healthy barbeque for everyone at the event. While there was some resistance, the overall message was that of support for the bold move.

For Leigh, it is impossible to look over how common diabetes is in the Community, impacting a lot of people. Starting from there, knowing people personally with diabetes and also knowing that diabetes is preventable for the future of our Community and for the children when they grow up, saying, “When you look at the young ones, you want a better future for them as well.”

An important lesson about sticking by a commitment, despite the pre-event conversations with the venue to confirm that the canteen would be closed, on the day of the tournament there was a short window agreed upon to provide tea and coffee for parents. During this time some sugary drinks were sold! So Leigh had to go and have a conversation and reinforce the importance of the commitment to healthy environments! Leigh said, “We then had to educate [venue manager] and make him stop that totally, so even then there wasn’t really that understanding that we were cutting sugar totally”.

“We also had some parents ask how come the canteen was closed, how come we weren’t selling soft drinks... and we talked to them about the healthy lifestyle messages ... and all the impact sugar has on health.”

“We’re trying to make sure that you guys’ choice is easier for you to make around health because we don’t have all the sugary stuff here and available.”

Leigh says it makes him feel fantastic to watch the kids having fun, making new friends and playing great sport.

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*When we asked Leigh what advice he has for event organisers who are thinking about having Sugary Drink Free or Water Only events, he says*

*“Just do it! Work with the mob who can do it, don’t wait for someone else to do it, you can be the person who drives it”*

*“I hope for us to be a healthy mob going forward and looking after one another.”*

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## KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Event organizer (Leigh Saunders) committed both personally and professionally to a healthy environment, including going Sugary Drinks Free and getting other people on board
- Established relationship with Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Healthy Lifestyle team, conversations over time about sport settings as health promoting environments and healthy food and water
- Conversations with Community members before the event
- Commitment to close the canteen at the venue, and ensure compliance on the day
- Easy availability of tap and bottled water
- 300 #DrinkWaterUMob refillable water bottles provided by VACCHO
- Free healthy barbeque provided by VAHS Healthy Lifestyle team
- Visibility of health messages, conversations with health workers and promotional material
- Willingness to be bold

## CHALLENGES

- Canteen opened for limited hours to sell tea and coffee, and people asked for and were sold sugary drinks for a short period of time before Organisers stopped this
- Some resistance from Community members, but only in the lead up to the event