



Healthy venues

Murray Aquatic and Leisure Centre, Shire of Murray

The Murray Aquatic and Leisure Centre (MALC) is a large community hub which attracts approximately 150,000 visits per year from participants, spectators, supporters and volunteers. In 2021/22, The Shire of Murray in partnership with the South Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS) and Western Australian School Canteen Association (WASCA) created a healthier food environment at the MALC thanks to a grant from Healthway.

The project included the development of a healthy community venue policy, menu assessments, analysis of monthly sales data and the installation of new healthy signage, digital media and educational information to replace junk food signage.

Eight staff members across the Shire of Murray and MALC completed the free Fuel to Go & Play® online training to learn more about providing healthier options at the venue.

Menu assessments by SMHS and WASCA in May 2021 and June 2022 showed positive changes in the availability of healthy options, including:

- green coded food and drinks (on offer), increased by 31 percentage points (i.e. 194 per cent more green items)
- amber coded food and drinks (on offer), decreased by 7 percentage points (i.e. 25 per cent less amber items)
- red coded food and drinks (on offer), decreased by 25 percentage points (i.e. 45 per cent less red items).

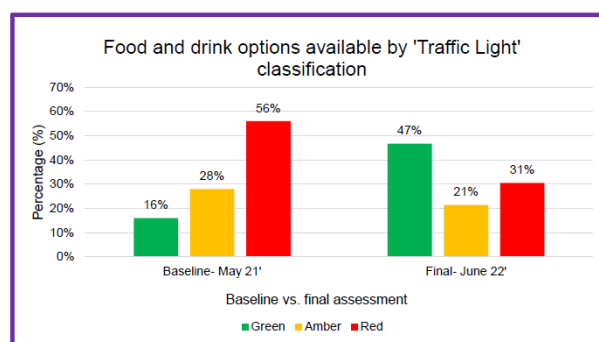
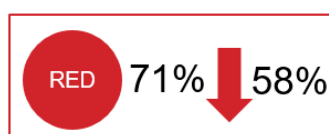
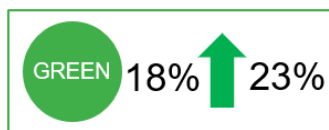


Figure 1: MALC baseline and final menu assessment results validated by WASCA.

Monthly sales data was analysed and reviewed by SMHS to introduce healthy food and drink products and replace unhealthy options with low sale numbers.

Sales



As a proportion of the average number of food and drinks sold in July 2021 to September 2021, compared to April 2022 to June 2022, sales of:

- green coded items increased by 28 per cent (from 18 per cent to 23 per cent)
- amber coded items increased by 73 per cent (from 11 per cent to 19 per cent).
- healthy food and drinks (green and amber coded items combined) increased by 45 per cent (from 29 per cent to 42 per cent)
- unhealthy food and drinks (red coded items) decreased by 18 per cent (from 71 per cent to 58 per cent).



Sales data reflects the changes to healthier food and drink provision with increased sales of the healthy food and drink options and decreased sales of unhealthy food and drinks. The upwards trend of healthy food and drink sales and downward trend of unhealthy food and drink sales over the monitored period is very positive.

A commitment was shown by MALC to increase the promotion of healthier drink options. The drink fridges were rearranged to place healthier drinks at eye level and *Grab the Good* fridge decals were installed to remove sugary drinks from display. A trial was also implemented at the kiosk, where the two most popular flavours of sports drinks were replaced with sugar-free alternatives. Due to the success of the trial, the MBSC staff have continued to provide only sugar-free varieties for these two flavours as the total number of sports drinks sold increased over this period.

The Healthway funding was used to purchase two fridge decals promoting water, five wall decals, and three new café barriers displaying the *Grab the Good* message. Two large commercial TV screens displaying rotating slides including the kiosk menu with 'traffic light' information and localised *Grab the Good* designs were also purchased along with padding for six netball posts also displaying the message. A total of 70 'traffic light' product stickers to promote categorised food and drinks as green, amber or red were displayed.



Image: MALC display pre implementation



Image: MALC display post implementation

The changes at MALC have increased the availability and promotion of healthy food and drinks and decreased the availability and promotion of unhealthy food and drinks. This has resulted in greater access to healthier food and drink options for patrons, staff and visitors.

Feedback about the changes has been very positive.

“...Some (customers) have commented that the changes are great, love the stickers etc”.

MALC staff member

“Players, visitors and staff at the MALC now have the choice to purchase healthy foods and drinks with an increased proportion of the refreshed menu including healthier options”

*Shire of Murray President
David Bolt*

“We have had some positive feedback from both staff and customers saying it is easier making healthier choices”.

MALC staff member