



Case study 8

Water only schools

Goulburn Valley Water

This case study showcases

water businesses delivering more than just water and sewerage provision

Problem

Many parts of Australia, and particularly regional cities and towns, have a high incidence of health issues relating to obesity and other lifestyle diseases. High consumption of sugary drinks is a strong contributing factor and is associated with an increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, weight gain and obesity, as well as poor dental health. Lack of adequate hydration is also increasingly being linked to decreased cognitive function in children. Many communities lack education on the detrimental health effects of sugary drinks. Tap water is a healthy, hydrating and cheap alternative to soft drinks and other sugary drinks.

Solution

Active programs are offered in the Goulburn Valley and Barwon regions to engage schools in the benefit of drinking tap water.

Goulburn Valley Water's 'Water Only Schools' Program is offered to schools in the local community, where students are only allowed to drink water and plain

milk at schools. Students are not able to bring in other drinks into school or buy any other drinks. Goulburn Valley Water have also engaged local health organisations to assist in delivering a community education program which promotes the health, financial and environmental benefits of choosing tap water. While the program mainly targets students, staff and parents are also engaged through newsletters and other collateral.

Success in the Water Only Schools to has raised its profile of the program and a number of workplaces are now keen to be involved. 'Water Only Workplaces' launched in June 2016 with a number of local indigenous community service groups, for example the Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative which provides a range of support services for indigenous communities such as health and cultural activities. The program is also looking to expand into early childhood education – e.g. childcare, kindergartens and pre-schools.

Business case

The program is run at a very low cost to GVW, with some staff time and giveaways such as water bottles required during launch activities, but very little upkeep thereafter.

Key drivers

The initial idea for the 'Water Only Schools' program came from Barwon Water, who has been partnering Barwon Health on a similar program, H2Only, in Geelong. Developing a 'Water Only' program complimented Goulburn Valley Water's comprehensive education program. Goulburn Valley Water has taken the role of the lead agent (which in the Barwon region has been led by the health agency) and engaged local health organisations to partner and deliver the project. The program also complements the 'Be Smart – Choose Tap' campaign which has been developed by Yarra Valley Water and has shared with other Victorian utilities to create a strong and united 'brand' for tap water.

Benefit/outcome

Improved health, financial and environmental outcomes of the community through promotion of tap water

Improved partnerships between Goulburn Valley Water and community, as well as local health organisations.

Reputational benefits