Christies Beach Primary School
 Links between student wellbeing and food gardens

**An eat well be active - Primary Schools project school**

Thank you to NRM for developing this case Study in collaboration with Christies Beach PS staff and students.

Christies Beach Primary School is developing their food garden with the support of their local community. They are already seeing the benefits for student wellbeing.

The food garden began as a project by the Student Representative Council. The SRC is subdivided into four action groups; fundraising, grounds, learning and safety & wellbeing. Each group has contributed to the project e.g. holding school fundraising events and participating in an excursion to a local nursery. The SRC designed the food garden, sought funding, purchased the plants and participated in working bees. CBPS joined the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative-SA this year which is delivered by the NRM Education team which is funded by the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board. NRM Education Officer, Sophie Rogers visits the school and provides support with sustainability initiatives such as food gardens. With Sophie Rogers the SRC created a rough map of what they would like in the space and planned their project using the ‘growing a project tree’ template. Sophie Rogers said that it’s “great that the students are leading the project and making a visible positive contribution to their community”.

The food garden has been designed with each class having their own garden bed, and a shared circular garden bed (this is a permaculture principle). Nearby there is a friendship tree with logs around it for seating, a garden tool area which has a food recycling bin and a shaded structure for outdoor play and class activities. CBPS also has a very active and highly valued Aboriginal Parents’ Group which has shown great support for the project, such as running a community barbeque to raise money for plants and helping at working bees. Some members of this group are local artists who have designed and painted some of the garden beds and supported classes in creating and painting a visual story for their class garden bed (see photo).

Students have thoroughly enjoyed getting their hands dirty and have been eager to get outside and water the plants. Chrissa Connor, School Counsellor and SRC facilitator has started a scrap book for participants to share their experiences in the garden. Science classes are already using the food garden as part of their curriculum. Sophie
Rogers will be running a staff workshop to increase staff confidence and skills in using the garden for learning. The school values the garden as an important space for students to learn about literacy, art, science, healthy eating and positive relationships.

Chrissa said “the school garden has been a wonderful place for hands-on learning experiences that enables our young people to take ownership and be involved with other students who they may generally not interact with. You can often find me with a group of children excitedly planting, watering, weeding and having lots of conversations! But like any great project comes a lot of behind the scenes support. We have been fortunate to have opportunities to apply for grants from our local shopping plaza and council, as well as donations from supermarkets and parent support groups at school. Thankfully there are also passionate people like Sophie who keep us motivated (like a personal trainer), especially when a challenge arises.” CBPS are planning a celebration to recognise those in their community that have supported them on this project. The SRC recently applied for an NRM School Action Grant for fruit trees and have been successful. They have planted the fruit trees along a path to the shaded structure, with ongoing support from Darren the grounds person.

Future opportunities include the community and students picking the produce and using fresh ingredients in cooking activities.

NRM Education works with early learning, primary and high schools that have joined the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative-SA on sustainability initiatives. For more information about this service visit [www.nrmeducation.net.au](http://www.nrmeducation.net.au)

ABOVE is a photo that features Buttercup the school cow who was part of a term project that two Junior Primary classes undertook for a competition.

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**eat well be active** - Primary Schools Project, a joint SA Health and Department for Education and Child Development project from 2008-2013