

# SYMPOSIUM 2019 ROUNDUP



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AND MUCH, MUCH MORE.....

# Welcome EHPA Board Members

Welcome to our newest EHPA Board Members.

We would like to welcome Leah Farrell from Nillumbik Shire Council and Shelly Kaur from Hindmarsh Shire Council as Directors on the board of EHPA.

We are very excited to have them on Board and we wish them all the best.

We would also like to thank long time Board Members David Esmore (Baw Baw Shire Council) and Carolyn Anderson (City of Yarra) who have recently stepped down from the Board for their contribution. It has been greatly appreciated.

It's great to have a mix of environmental health practitioners from Victoria and interstate, from the private sector and local government, based in metropolitan and rural areas to provide a balanced viewpoint about the profession and to lead our organisation into the future.

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## Upcoming Events

### Mark Your Diary Now!

### Food Forum 2020 is on the 17 March 2020 at the Hotel Windsor

For more events --> [EHPA Event Calendar](#) <--

### EHPA Tamper Evident Tape



Can be used for food sampling or sealing off an area or a fridge etc.

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## President's Message

Dear EHPA members,

Wow, what a year it's been! I hope you enjoy the final edition of Health Focus for 2019. I'm Adam Lee, and it's a great honour and privilege to be your new President. I have 17 years' experience in the environmental health profession and am currently the Coordinator of Environmental Health with Surf Coast Shire.



There is a massive amount of volunteer work which goes into making our organisation great, and I would like to thank:

- Our Regional Code of Practice (COP), Special Interest Group (SIG) Convenors and fellow Board Directors, who are the backbone of our organisation.
- Our newsletter editor, Angela Minglis, who continues to compile interesting case studies and stories.
- Our members, which contribute stories and share case studies to make our newsletter possible.
- The Emergency Management SIG for delivering the renowned Emergency Management Course for Public Health Professionals back at its spiritual home of Mount Macedon.
- The Symposium Committee for planning and delivering a great event.

Also, congratulations to all of our award winners announced at the Symposium.

A huge thanks to Sarah Annells, our outgoing President, for your amazing leadership and efforts over the past three years and last but not least, the tireless work and dedication of our Executive Officer, Bernadet Ferraro, which is always appreciated.

One of Sarah's achievements during her Presidency was advocating for the continuation of a course at Swinburne for the qualification of Environmental Health Officers in Victoria. As a result, the new Graduate Diploma of Environmental Health Practice at Swinburne University is starting next year. Please promote the awareness of the course where you can.

One of the biggest challenges we face as a profession is the invisibility of the environmental health profession within the general community. We need to find ways to raise the environmental health profile within our communities to ensure students entering university are aware of the profession. It's going to be a super exciting year ahead with loads of professional development training, including the Food Forum scheduled for March 2020 and next year's Symposium within the Grampians Region. Stay tuned for a comprehensive events calendar next year.

On behalf of EHPA, I would like to wish you and your loved ones a happy and safe festive season. I look forward to seeing you all in 2020!

### Adam Lee

National President

Environmental Health Professionals Australia

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

The EHPA Office will be closed from **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019** - and will reopen on **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020**



We hope that you all have a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year.

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🏠 Executive Officer & Company Secretary  
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# Big Congratulations to our New Fellows

Five members have been upgraded to the status of Fellow for their outstanding contribution to Environmental Health Professionals Australia and the profession.

## Carolyn Anderson

Carolyn Anderson has been a member of the EHPA Board for the six years and is currently National Vice President. Carolyn has successfully fulfilled the role of Board Liaison for the past three years and has supported the Emergency Management SIG in delivering the Emergency Management Course and Emergency Management Forums. Carolyn has been a valued member of EHPA for many years, and we would like to recognise her as a Fellow.

## Luke Mitton

In his time as a member of EHPA Luke Mitton has been a long term Regional Group secretary to the Grampians Region and has been a Member of the EHPA Board of Directors, including taking on the role of Vice President. Luke has been a key supported or EHO's in the region. We want to thank Luke for his longstanding contribution to EHPA and welcome him as a Fellow of EHPA.

## Louis Papageorgiou

Louis has been a strong supporter of EHPA since its beginning and in previous organisations. Louis was the second president after we incorporated EHPA in 2012 and led the organisation through its establishment and consolidation stages. Louis is

an active member of EHPA and a strong supporter of Environmental Health as a profession. I am very pleased to recognise his contribution and welcome him as a Fellow of EHPA.

## Teresa Arnup

Teresa Arnup has worked tirelessly for her region, including organising forums and workshop to be held in Loddon Mallee. Teresa was a regional group secretary for many years and has been an active participant in Symposium committees. Teresa is always happy to help her fellow EHO's out and goes above and beyond for residents, thinking outside the box to come up with creative solutions. It is with great pleasure that I present you with this certificate of fellowship.

## David Esmore

David Esmore was a long-standing member of the old Australian Institute of Environmental Health (Victorian Division) and an active Board Member during that time. Since the inception of EHPA, David has been an active advocate for the profession and a Director of EHPA. David has been a Board Rep for the Gippsland Region and has supported many EHOs in their early career. I am very pleased to recognise his contribution and welcome him as a Fellow of EHPA.



Teresa Arnup, Louis Papageorgiou, Carolyn Anderson, David Esmore, Luke Mitton

# EHPA-Maddocks Professional Excellence Awards

At the Symposium the Winners of the 2019 Maddocks Awards were announced. EHPA would like to thank Maddocks and the recipients of the awards. We would also like to thank the nominations that were submitted. The Awards recognise excellence in the profession.

## Tahlia Grandin

Young Environmental Health Professional of the Year



Tahlia had previously worked at Baw Baw Shire as a technical officer whilst completing a science degree, microbiology. Tahlia has just finished the Environmental Health qualification and graduated in November 2018.

"Tahlia is amazing-juggling study, kids, and work; and Tahlia is always happy and delightful".

Ellen stated, "As a Baw Baw Tech Officer, Tahlia did a big investigation into food premises on tank water and the microbial risks. She is beyond the normal skills of an EHO".

At the time of recruiting Tahlia Grandin to Baw Baw Shire Council, the Public Health function fundamentally required a re-connect with the Baw Baw community. Tahlia hit the ground running (a major understatement). As part of a strong rebuild with food premise operators Tahlia: Delivered a series of comprehensive food operator training. (while parallel planning her wedding). Revamped Council Health Manager Software, including the adoption of mobile inspection capacity.

Attended all major festivals, events and farmers markets to gauge risks of domestic premises food manufacture.

Tahlia volunteered to be 'subject expert' for our corporate "Better Approvals" rollout, taking herself off-line for four weeks to improve the customer experience for many corporate permits and approvals, receiving corporate recognition as "the person that gets it done".

Tahlia is currently acting Coordinator of Public Health, supervising 2 EHO's, Environmental Officer: wastewater and dedicated admin officer; all of which respect Tahlia as a young leader.

Comments Council receive about Tahlia include "Tahlia is lovely and so professional". And that pretty much sums it up -Tahlia achieves every task, both assigned and strategically planned, which makes her very professional. Tahlia can conduct herself in an endearing way across every section of our community.

## George Baker

Award for Innovation and Excellence



George accepted the role of Regional Secretary for EHPA Loddon Mallee Region in 2017. Since that time

Continued next page →

**MADDOCK AWARDS (Con't)**

George has been working hard to build the profile of Environmental Health in the region, strengthen the capacity of the workforce, and strengthen the Community of Practice meetings to be engaging, informative, educational and collaborative.

The meetings are run in a clear direction, and it is apparent at every point that the overall objective is to develop as a profession and develop our standing as a profession.

George has been pivotal in the Loddon Mallee region, finding a powerful voice of influence on providing feedback to proposed legislation and policy changes. Furthermore, he has not missed an opportunity for the region to be heard on topics that form day to day Environmental Health practice, and those functions on the periphery.

The standard of the profession is regularly boosted by George maximising connections and his



Tahlia Grandin, George Baker, Mark Hoyne (City of Yarra)

networks. The image has stepped from focused regulators to motivated, informed, progressive and powerful advocates for health protection in rural and regional communities. This has involved engagement with state, federal and local stakeholders, many of whom were not previously engaged with the Environmental Health profession but are now key advocates for the cause. As an Environmental Health Officer, George has grown considerably in his time with us at Greater Bendigo City Council. While his connections and

networks are a key attribute, he is also the holder of considerable knowledge in risk assessment, managing natural and built water environments, and has recently made some pioneering steps in resolving allergen management issues.

We are pleased to be able to share George's extensive skills and knowledge with our region and look forward to a bright future with George on board.

**City of Yarra  
Robert L Handby Award for Team Excellence and Innovation**

The City of Yarra Health Protection Unit (HPU) has created a program - EHO's on **TRAK**.

- T** (Technology Driven)
- R** (Reducing Paper)
- A** (Acquiring Information)
- K** (Improving Knowledge)

This is a program of continuous improvement with a focus on sustainability, utilising technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness for EHOs in their day to day work practices.

- Council Focus**  
Yarra Council has seven strategic objectives listed in the current City Plan. Three of these are particularly relevant to the HPU and drive our work direction:
- **A Healthy Yarra** – Community health, safety and wellbeing are a focus in everything we do.
  - **A Sustainable Yarra** – Council leads on sustainability and protects and enhances its natural environment.
  - **A Leading Yarra** – Transparency, performance and community participation drive the way we operate.

The mobility program and increased use of electronic processes in HPU has resulted in significant benefits, including:

- Increased security and control of documents and file information,
- Improved accessibility to information on record,
- Improved accuracy and consistent formats for recording inspection results by the use of template checklists,

- Reduced use of paper,
- Reduced cost of paper and mail outs,
- Improved readability with typed rather than handwritten reports,
- Increased responsiveness by the HPU as information can be accessed in the field,
- Improved timeliness of information to all customers including the community and registered businesses,
- Reduced administration time for preparing postage and filing,
- Utilising and developing existing resources and programs, and
- Meeting the expectations of the community in striving for best practice.

Yarra's goal of continuous improvement means processes and systems will continue to be reviewed and amended over time to achieve positive outcomes.

Photos individual if you can place next to blurb. Photos in order are City of Yarra, George Baker and Tahlia Grandin  
Also place group photo here.

We look forward to your nominations in 2020.



**ENVIRO  
SIG News**

By Guiliano Maron, Environment SIG Convenor

**Updates from the Environment SIG regarding 2018 and 2019**

- In addition to regular meetings in 2018 and 2019, our SIG made submissions, participated in external groups and organised professional development events as listed below:
- Development of a submission to the SEPP Waters Review in 2018.
  - Delivery of the On-site Wastewater Forum in 2018 in Ballarat.
  - Delivery of the Noise Forum in 2019 in Melbourne.
  - Participation in the Standards Australia Committee review of "DR AS/NZS 4766:2019, Rotationally moulded buried, partially buried and non-buried storage tanks for water and chemicals".
  - Engagement with EPA Victoria and DELWP on 23 September 2019 for a better understanding of the major changes in the environment protection framework. Including the general environmental duty and some of the specifics on noise and on-site wastewater affecting local governments.

**Noise Forum**

The Environment SIG convened the Noise Forum on 21 June 2019 in Melbourne.

EPA Victoria, Mornington Peninsula Shire, Sherwell Harrison Munro Lawyers, Renzo Tonin & Associates presented concepts and case studies on managing noise.

Nearly 90 delegates attended the event. Again, a significant number of responses were collected from a post-event online survey.

The survey has proven essential for the Environment SIG to continue to enhance development opportunities and support the building of capacity within the environmental health sector.

**SIGs and Regional Groups** are run frequently and are a fantastic resource for keeping abreast of interesting issues.  
Contact Bernadet to make sure you don't miss the next one.

📞 03 9438 5960 [info@ehpa.org.au](mailto:info@ehpa.org.au)



Public Health & Wellbeing SIG

## EHPA PHWB SIG forum

By Leo Manca, PHWB SIG Convenor

The Public Health and Wellbeing SIG held its annual forum on 15 August 2019. The event was held at the William Angliss Conference Centre for the second consecutive year.

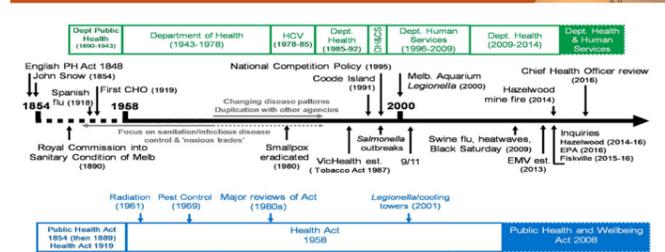
The CBD venue never disappoints with its menu and is beginning to be a favourite with this SIG.

As the draft Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 were out for consultation, the program featured many presentations from DHHS, including the opening address from Deputy Chief Health Officer, Dr Angie Bone.

Dr Bone spoke about her gratitude to EHOs and the importance of work conducted at local government in the protection of public health. Climate change was discussed as a threat to public health, and the need for the collective to do more to mitigate the threats.

DHHS provided the presentations until morning tea, with Ming Ding, Vanora Mulvenna and Catherine Feeney presenting on the "Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations review", "Thunderstorm Asthma public health campaign" and "Aquatic Facilities review" respectively.

### Public Health Law in Victoria



Regulation Sunset Review - Ming Ding

Ming Ding explained the process required to ensure the regulations were passed and what the next steps of the review would look like.

The vast reforms were categorised into four categories:

- Regulatory schemes administered by council;
- Regulatory schemes administered by DHHS;
- Infectious diseases, microorganisms and conditions;
- and, Other.

The new Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 will take effect from 15 December 2019, except for the prescribed accommodation provisions, which have been granted a 12-month extension and will be made in 2020 in separate regulations.

Vanora Mulvenna's presentation explained the unforeseen phenomena that was thunderstorm asthma in 2016, a timely reminder as we head into weather conditions that are likely to repeat the issue that saw many deaths and emergency services overloaded with demand.

Vanora's presentation explained the public health campaign to educate the community and public health professionals to prevent and respond to any future occurrence. Catherine Feeney explained the proposed aquatic facilities review, which proposes that Category 1 aquatic facilities be registered with councils, among other additions.

The next three presentations provided the delegates with food for thought, as they provided insight into complex matters.

As a former Police officer, Rhys Holder has executed many search warrants. As the Safer Communities Operational Coordinator at Yarra Ranges, he shared his experiences on what to be prepared for while executing a search warrant, including the occupier leaving the premises to do the school pick-up!



Captain Hindsight - South Park

Rhys also made good use of a video clip from

South Park (Captain Hindsight) to highlight the importance of experience in identifying risks.

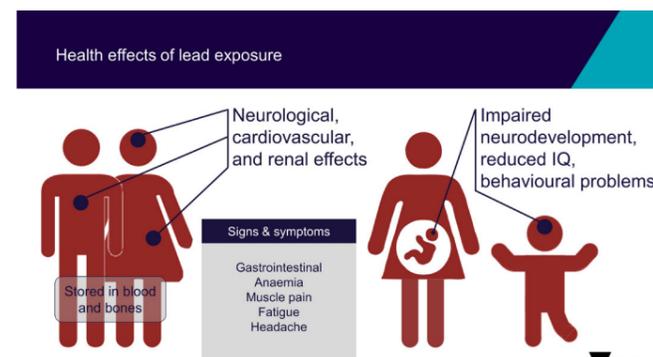
Ten years ago, Marcus Heath (Russell Kennedy) was educating EHOs on how to implement a new Act called the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.

Marcus' presentation was on "Better Settled Privately", what those words mean and how councils should be applying it. The key message from Marcus is that "Better Settled Privately" should be used if council enforcement is not the best option to remedy the nuisance.

Elise Caldwell (Maddocks) shared insights on how to deal with unreasonable complainants, without breaching Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities or Equal Opportunity Act.

If a complainant shows signs of being unreasonable, Councils are within their rights to restrict who they speak to, what issues can be discussed, when they can be discussed and how they can be contacted.

Suzie Sarkis (DHHS) brought us back from the lunch break with examples of lead in water from defective plumbing equipment and fittings. One case study identified lead in water from public drinking water fountains.



Case for change Lead in plumbing - Suzie Sarkis

The level of risk was rated as low due to public drinking water fountains not being the main source of water and the advice from enHealth is to flush for 30 seconds before drinking.

Rebecca Feldman (DHHS) identified the insufficiencies in the current regulations to deal with mosquitoes and the reason for a change to the proposed regulations. Rebecca urged councils to participate in the mosquito surveillance program, highlighting the

important and unexpected data obtained from the City of Boroondara.

Cat O'Bryan (EPA) provided successful case studies of OPLEs working with local government.

We were introduced to Claire Sonogo, an OPLE with Brimbank/Hobsons Bay to provide a first-hand account of a noise investigation that was successfully resolved by assessing the noise under SEPP N-1.

Our final two presenters were tasked with shedding some light in the complex area of hoarding.

Peter Yeoman (MFB) discussed the MFB's hoarding notification system. The HNS is used by MFB to identify and prevent serious fire risks.

If a notification is sent by council to MFB, a system-generated email will be sent to council 18 months later to follow up if the property still requires attention. Fires in hoarding households account for 24% of all preventable fire fatalities since 1999.

Last, but certainly not least was Kirsten Jenkins (Maroondah City Council) to share the great work done by the Maroondah Hoarding Network. The network maintains a list of hoarding properties and have developed a risk matrix for addressing each issue in a consistent manner.

Kirsten highlighted the importance of relationship building so that each agency can tackle complex issues (as if hoarding wasn't complex enough!).

Many thanks go to the Public Health and Wellbeing SIG and Bernadet for producing a great event.

If you have any suggestions for what you would like to see at a future forum, or would like to be a part of the SIG, please contact us.

**SIGs and Regional Groups** are run frequently and are a fantastic resource for keeping abreast of interesting issues.

Contact Bernadet to make sure you don't miss the next one.

03 9438 5960 [info@ehpa.org.au](mailto:info@ehpa.org.au)

# Thunderstorm asthma alert system launched in Victoria to prevent repeat of disaster



**ABC Weather**  
By Kate Doyle, Ben Deacon and Sarina Locke

A new world-first alert system has been launched in Victoria in a bid to prevent another thunderstorm asthma disaster like the one in Melbourne last year that killed nine people.

- Key Points**
- New thunderstorm asthma warning system in Victoria
  - Runs from October to December
  - Go to [www.emergency.vic.gov.au/prepare](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/prepare)

The system is part of a \$15 million joint effort by the Victorian Government in partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology and Melbourne and Deakin universities.

It takes into account weather conditions, hospital presentations and pollen levels, with the aid of five new pollen monitoring sites. A website and app provide forecasts, information and alerts about potential thunderstorm asthma conditions.

This new alert is in response to the disaster on the 21st of November last year, when Ambulance Victoria became overwhelmed by desperate calls from thousands of people with acute respiratory problems.

Ambulance Victoria's Health Commander Paul Holman said it had been extremely traumatic. "We never envisaged being overwhelmed, we never envisaged not having ambulances to send to emergencies, we never envisaged not being able to answer Triple 0 calls," Mr Holman said.

"We didn't have a process to tell people that we couldn't come and we couldn't attend and give them the right advice."

## What causes thunderstorm asthma?

Last November's outbreak was the result of plentiful rye-grass pollen and a thunderstorm that lifted and ruptured pollen into tiny fragments.

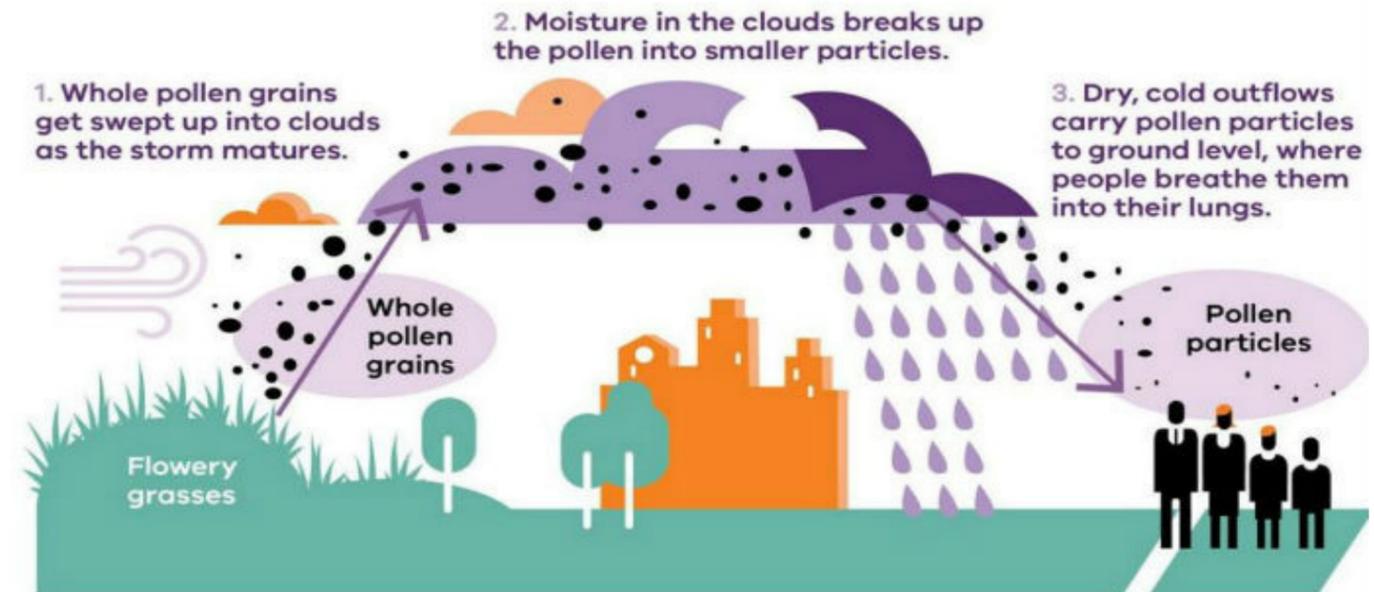
Mr Holman said the pollen grains had been saturated with water before they exploded into millions of fine particles.

"Those fine particles were delivered in a

mist with that wind right across Melbourne," Mr Holman said.

"So what we had in effect was a major hazardous material, a HazMat, a gas laden with

## What is thunderstorm asthma?



toxic material hitting a whole range of people." Thunderstorm asthma is a well documented phenomenon in south eastern Australia.

Wagga Wagga, Newcastle and Canberra have all had events in the past.

Thunderstorm asthma does not just occur in traditional asthma sufferers, it affects those who have an allergic reaction to the grains in the air.

## Hayfever sufferers at risk

Guy Marks, Professor of Respiratory Medicine at the University of NSW, said it affected people sensitive to pollen.

He said in most cases that was grass pollen, but it also happened internationally with fungal spores.

"They cause swelling in the airways and contraction of smooth muscle around the airways and cause the airways to narrow, which is classic asthma," Professor Marks said. Those who suffer from hayfever are very often at risk.

The Victorian Department of Health advised those who suffered from breathing difficulties to remain indoors when an event was forecast. People were also advised to turn air conditioners to recycle and to have medication nearby.

## People need to help themselves

The nine victims of last year's storm — that also hospitalised 10,000 people — could not be reached by the ambulance service in time. The new early warning system will help Victorian emergency services to be proactive and prepare in advance for thunderstorm asthma events.

But Mr Holman said communities also needed to take responsibility for their own health. "The expectations on ambulance, fire services, police that we're going to come and save you are unrealistic in our environment," he said. "We have to talk with the community, engage with the community first and foremost before we do anything else."

"We are just boys and girls trying to do the best we can in adverse situations.

"We need to get that message across to our community and our politicians — to think as a community. How can we support ourselves?" The forecasting system will run from October 1 until the end of December during the Victorian grass pollen season.

This article was written by Kate Doyle, Ben Deacon and Sarina Locke and first appeared on ABC News October 10, 2017

## DOWNLOAD

To access the forecasts, Victorians should download the Vic Emergency App or visit

[www.emergency.vic.gov.au/prepare](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/prepare)



# Yarra - Proudly Plastic Free Program

The Waste Minimisation Team at Yarra City Council conducted a Pilot of the Proudly Plastic Free Program between June and August 2019.

By Melanie Holmes, Environmental Health Officer City of Yarra

This behaviour change campaign aims to reduce single-use plastic packaging in food premises and educate the community on plastic waste avoidance.

The objectives of the program are to:

1. Reduce the use of disposable and single used plastics;
2. Build community understanding, education and action on reducing single-use plastic; and
3. Deliver education and engagement activities about waste minimisation and avoidance.

The program targets 6 plastic items, coffee cups, straws, plastic bags, plastic takeaway containers, water bottles and food ware (ie: cutlery). Encouraging waste avoidance is the main priority, which practically means, removing avoidable plastic packaging, incentivising customer BYO options, and when single-use is necessary, switching to recyclable alternatives.

To participate in the pilot, traders were required to eliminate 3 of the 6 items listed. There are 20 active participant businesses. Because of the nature and demographics of the pilot area, a number of traders were

already embracing and promoting waste avoidance options.

Traders were engaged directly and invited to participate. Yarra staff found it important to have a clear pitch about the program and undertake discussions in person (or over the phone) at a time that suited time-poor small business owners. A Trader Induction Kit was provided that included information on packaging and alternatives, as well as food safety requirements. A survey was also undertaken to gather baseline data on

## Yarra's Zero Waste Map

An online directory profiling business and community initiatives across Yarra that promote waste reduction through their products, services or business practices. This brings together information from a number of existing online sources and includes information gathered directly from the Plastic Free Pilot Program. <https://made.withalpaca.com/locale/city-of-yarra-zero-waste/default>

packaging used. This was followed up with tailored packaging information around these products.

The program was promoted in conjunction with Plastic Free July, using a range of instore material, footpath decals, social media channels (reaching almost 10,000 people) and

a launch event with 130 people attending. Participating traders were also profiled in Yarra's new Zero Waste Map in the "plastic-free" category.

As a direct result of the pilot program, a number of different single-use plastic item types have been completely removed and a total of 1,750 items per week are being avoided. A number of participating traders have started allowing BYO takeaway containers, with some offering incentives to do this. Since it launched Council has been approached by several businesses in North Fitzroy and across Yarra seeking to join the program. The campaign has also received

national media coverage in The Age newspaper.

Barriers for trader uptake and engagement included time involved, the convenience of single-use packaging, concerns around food safety for BYO containers, lack of suitable packaging alternatives (and/or cost of these) and 'greenwash' claims of some existing packaging used.

The Waste Minimisation Team are currently considering a new target area to expand the program further



## Food Safety

The Public Health Unit were consulted and provided advice around food safety legislation and potential sources of contamination. Areas of concern included the cleanliness of BYO containers and how these could potentially contaminate the food provided to that customer but also to other food contact surfaces in the business.

Advice was provided that traders should consider serving food into containers at the front counter rather than take them into the kitchen or exposed food handling area. Swap programs would also need to ensure that returned containers were placed in an area not likely to pose a contamination risk until they could be washed and sanitised.

Survey results and discussions with food premises revealed that most understood their responsibilities to serve food in a way that prevented contamination. Some traders were already accepting customer BYO containers or had a 'swap and go' system already set up. For others there was concern about accepting customer containers that may be contaminated.

Responses varied from trader to trader, while many businesses already accepted reusable coffee cups, this expanded for some to also serving food straight into customer containers on the front counter. However, a number of traders noted times when they had refused containers that were visibly contaminated and this resulted customers becoming defensive.

# When Jaclyn said she was allergic to pesto, the chef just scraped it off

By Nick Bonyhady  
July 30, 2019

Jaclyn Jauhiainen's 22nd birthday was not quite what she had hoped.

Sharing breakfast with her sister, Ms Jauhiainen told the restaurant she suffers from anaphylaxis triggered by tree nuts, including cashews and pistachios, as well as honey.

Allergy sufferer Jaclyn Jauhiainen is excited for the National Allergy Strategy's new online training program, which is freely available to all cooks and chefs from today.

The waitress said she understood, but Ms Jauhiainen's meal still came back with pine nut-laden pesto on top. She complained, and the waitress took it back, saying the restaurant would remake the meal.

When the plate returned, it was clear the staff had just scraped the pesto off, leaving enough nut residue on the food to hospitalise her.

"I got really upset and didn't want to confront them again. I just paid and left, but obviously I didn't eat it because what they really didn't understand is that I still can't eat it," Ms Jauhiainen, who is now 24 and studying psychology, said.

Today, the National Allergy Strategy unveiled a new free online training module for cooks and chefs.

It teaches chefs basic lessons like separating cooking surfaces for different food, paying attention to unassuming elements of the dish that often cause problems (such as garnishes), and not using the same implements across



menu items.

Previous training developed by the organisation was aimed primarily at front of house staff, with over 11,000 food service industry workers taking part since it was launched in 2017.

"It is much-needed training," said chief executive of Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia Maria Said of the new training specifically for chefs, adding the biggest lesson was for cooks and chefs to take the issue seriously.

"The ones who really understand the seriousness of food allergies are often those who have seen an allergic reaction with their own eyes."

In Victoria, the only state which tracks the number of hospital admissions for anaphylaxis, about 50 people are admitted to hospital with anaphylaxis every week, with about 60 per cent of those admissions caused by food allergies.

Associate Professor Richard Loh from the University of Western Australia said the number of people with serious food allergies was rising fast nationwide.

Based on global and local studies, Associate Professor Loh estimates about 4 per cent of Australian adults – or about 800,000 people – have a food allergy, as distinct from those with a lower-level food intolerance. In addition, fewer people are growing out of childhood allergies.

"15 years ago, over 95 per cent of milk and egg allergy sufferers would outgrow it by age 16, now only 85 per cent have outgrown it. If it's peanut and tree nuts, only one in five outgrow it," he said.

"I keep warning about adult allergies — you need to be ready for this tsunami of young adults with food allergies."

As the number of allergy-sufferers grows, Associate Professor Loh said food service providers are "going to go broke" if they are unable to guarantee safe food for customers.

A particular challenge, Ms Said said, is that the food service industry has some of the highest rates of participation by new arrivals to Australia, some of whom may have had to deal with a different range of food allergies or have limited English.

Though the training is only offered in English at the moment, Ms Said said she wanted governments to translate Australia's food safety laws and codes into other languages, as well as make the training mandatory in the industry.

"Australia has a varied cuisine that we all love so much and treasure but it does cause issues for us when it comes to food allergies," she said. "Who checks that the people running the business understand our food standards code? It's a big issue."

Ms Jauhiainen said the training would have a huge positive impact on allergy sufferers, allowing them to dine out with confidence. "I'm really thankful and grateful for the people that actually do the training," she said.



Allergy sufferer Jaclyn Jauhiainen is excited for the National Allergy Strategy's new online training program, which is freely available to all cooks and chefs from today. Photo: Alina Gozin'a

# 'Playing Russian Roulette'

## Do restaurants care about your allergy?



**A German study of restaurant staff, published in Plos One today, has revealed widespread ignorance of food allergies among food service workers.**

By Mary Ward  
April 25, 2019

Of the 295 staff surveyed by researchers at the University of Dusseldorf, 35 per cent thought they could treat a customer having an allergic reaction by serving them cold water to "dilute the allergen", while one in five believed removing an allergen from a finished meal could be all that was necessary to provide a safe meal for a customer with an allergy.



Over 41 per cent of food service workers do not believe customers who say they have an allergy, a German survey has shown.

Over 41 per cent said they believed some customers fabricated allergies.

In Australia, where allergy rates are among the highest in the world, the ignorance might not be as pronounced, but diners with serious dietary requirements can still struggle.

Jasmine Wels, a nurse from Brighton in Adelaide's south, had an anaphylaxis reaction last month after ordering Indian takeaway online.

After she and her husband repeatedly alerted the restaurant to her severe cashew nut allergy – leaving a note on the online form as well as checking when the order was collected – Wels, 38, says a call to the restaurant after her reaction began highlighted the lack of knowledge

some people can have about food allergies.

I think my little three-year-old was quite traumatised, too, watching the whole thing.

"They said there were cashews in the samosa, 'so don't eat the samosa,'" she recalls.

With three small children, Wels says the stress of using her EpiPen, calling an ambulance, and then being hospitalised takes its toll not just physically, but emotionally.

"The psychological, 'near-death' stuff ... it's quite scary. I think my little three-year-old was quite traumatised, too, watching the whole thing."

Even when a menu claims to cater to people with food intolerances, there can be problems.

A 2018 study of food sold and served as "gluten-free" by businesses in Melbourne revealed nine per cent contained levels of gluten that could be harmful to a person with coeliac disease.

Julia Jensen, 25, experienced this first-hand when on a date in Sydney's Darling Harbour. The Sutherland Shire accountant, who has coeliac disease, ordered a meal marked gluten-free from a restaurant menu, only for her symptoms – cramping, vomiting and diarrhoea – to kick in after she had left an hour later, prompting a mad rush into another restaurant's bathroom.



Julia Jensen, who has coeliac disease, experienced a reaction after ordering a "gluten-free" meal.

# Capulus & Co takes Melbourne's coffee culture to another level



**When the Sullivans bought their Brunswick home 36 years ago, they could never have guessed what their lounge would become.**

By Rohan Smith

"It's crazy to think what's possible just from a hole in the wall," Christian says as we sit in the lounge room of the family home on Sydney Road in Brunswick, a bohemian shopping strip a stone's throw from the Melbourne CBD.

The conversation is interrupted from time to time as customers appear at the window for coffee.

Then more customers come. They just keep coming. Outside, on the nature strip, people sit at small tables sipping coffees

and eating cakes. There are normal, family homes on either side. It's a juxtaposition that takes some getting used to.

For more than a year, Christian, 26, his two sisters Francesca, 24, and Paris, 28, have been operating one of Melbourne's most unique businesses from their lounge room window.

Mum Julie works tirelessly behind the scenes, too.

"It kind of started as a bit of a joke from Dad," Paris says. "He said to Mum we should sell coffee and cake out of the window."

That was 15 years ago when the kids were trotting off to primary school.



The home on 9 Sydney Road, Brunswick hasn't needed to be converted. Source:news.com.au



Capulus & Co opened out of a Melbourne family's lounge room window last year. Source:news.com.au

"He was always saying it as a joke, that we should sell to our friends' parents on the way to school," Christian says. "Obviously, Mum brushed it off."

Years later, that seed of an idea was presented to Julie again.

"For me, it was just an absolute no at the start," she says. "But when Christian raised the idea later, it was a different time, and it was different home." "Everything kind of fell into place," Paris says.

The kids have all moved out now, but there was a period when they all lived and worked together under the same roof six days a week.

Francesca bakes the treats for the window, including salted chocolate chip cookies that she says are the favourite among customers. Christian does the financials and Paris does social media. Then they all share roles.

Success has come quickly, Christian says.

"I have been surprised by how well it's done. I set a goal when we started. Like, if we could make X amount of dollars on a daily basis then that would be good. And now we've gone above and beyond that."

For a long time, just a black curtain separated the makeshift coffee shop from the rest of the family home.

They now have a proper wall in place, but the sound of the coffee machine and the conversations between customers and their barista travel through the house. And almost everyone who appears at the window is a regular.

"We all said from the start that we have to know people's names," Paris says.

"So on Saturdays when all of our regulars come, it's like talking to friends. It's like, 'Hey Jack, hey Steph, hey Sophie'. We know everybody that comes to our cafe now."

"We've had loyal customers from day one," Julie says. "And friendships that have formed out of it, not just in the window."

The best part, she says, is working with her kids from home.

"I look at it like it's a privilege, seriously. That's not to say we don't have our ups and downs but it's normal. And we're able to learn things and deal with issues gently, amongst ourselves."

Capulus & Co operates from 9 Sydney Road, Brunswick. You can find them on Facebook and Instagram.



Coffee, anyone? Source:news.com.au

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