

2005 Public Health Awards for Excellence and Innovation:

Public Health Spotlight Award for Innovation

Taste 4 Health

Glen Eira City Council, Public Health Unit

Taste 4 Health is improving the health of people in the City of Glen Eira by increasing the availability of healthy food choices in restaurants, cafes and take-away food outlets.

This nutrition program is the first of its kind to be implemented in Victoria. Involving partnerships between Glen Eira Council and dietitians from Caulfield Community Health Service, Bentleigh Bayside Community Health Service and the International Diabetes Institute, Taste 4 Health recognises that the availability of healthy food is essential to improving health and tackling the issue of increasing obesity amongst Australians of all ages.

Taste 4 Health is designed to reduce the incidence of cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus and cancer, which are leading health issues in Glen Eira, as well as throughout Australia.

To participate in Taste 4 Health, businesses must first receive a five-star food safety rating, which ensures that the food is not only healthy, but is also prepared under safe and hygienic conditions.

The business's menu is then assessed against nutrition criteria developed in accordance with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and with input from the participating dietitians. Businesses that meet nutrition criteria in each of the four categories of fat, salt, sugar and fibre are awarded a gold, silver or bronze certificate for display at their business.

As part of Taste 4 Health, training is provided for local businesses and for the environmental health officers responsible for assessing businesses.

The outcomes of Taste 4 Health to date are very pleasing. As more businesses join the program each year, the number of healthy choices available at food outlets in Glen Eira has significantly increased. Participating businesses have reported that they are extremely satisfied with the program as it has assisted them to remain competitive with leading food chains that have implemented healthier menu choices, improved their ability to meet consumer demands, promoted their business, and taught them more about nutrition. Feedback from environmental health officers has assisted the dietitians to better understand the needs of businesses.

The program will be evaluated each year to ensure that it continues to meet its aims, while assisting businesses to participate.

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