Moonah Primary School
Award Submission

Minister's Award - Best Whole School Approach to Healthy Eating
Linked to the School Canteen

Environmentally Friendly Canteen Award
Moonah Primary School’s kitchen garden plays a central role in the culture of our school community. Moonah Primary School has created a vibrant and positive food culture with our large productive kitchen garden at its heart. As a demonstration school for the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKG) program since 2009, we immerse our students in hands-on, pleasurable food education, and our students grow and harvest fresh, seasonal produce in the garden and prepare and share dishes in the kitchen from the food they have grown.

MPS has built on the SAKG philosophy of teaching children positive food habits for life. We are connecting students’ kitchen garden learning to what is sold in our school canteen. This year our canteen was relocated into our kitchen building (below) and all pre-packaged food eliminated from the menu. The canteen now offers healthy, handmade, ‘real’ food freshly prepared from scratch, using quality seasonal produce. Our canteen meals are served through glass sliding doors which open to a welcoming outdoor space with tables and seating (below) located next to our large, productive garden. Students sit and enjoy their food together near where their food is prepared and beside the garden where the food is grown. This physical relationship between the kitchen, canteen and garden creates strong connections between the food learning taking place in kitchen and garden classes and the healthy food available in the canteen.
Our Kitchen and Garden Specialists and Canteen Manager collaborate to create termly menus in response to seasonal produce availability. In addition to the regular canteen menu which features two lunch choices per week, a weekly Specials blackboard offers favourite dishes from that week’s cooking classes. The Specials board also enables the canteen to flexibly respond to donations of produce or excess harvest from the garden by offering a range of handmade, healthy items as weekly specials, which makes the most of produce when it is available, and minimises food waste.

Examples of lunch-order dishes and blackboard special items that have been available in our canteen clockwise from top left: pumpkin scones; jacket potatoes with coleslaw; fruit muffins; vegetable frittata and salad; pumpkin and kale soup; and a selection of salads including pear and rocket.
Our kitchen garden is the heart of our school, and offers a rich resource for classroom learning. At MPS we are always striving to find ways to embed the kitchen garden program across all areas of the curriculum. Examples of the curriculum alignment that will occur this term include:

- The Early Childhood classes will explore literacy and fractions by making and slicing pizzas in the kitchen
- Kitchen and garden Word Walls will be created to explore cooking, food and gardening vocabulary, which will in turn inspire story writing projects
- The 4/5 classes will learn about soils with their inquiry focus in the garden
- Recipes will be examined and discussed in the classroom before students come to cooking class, to enhance understanding of food terminology
- Students will have the opportunity to taste food from our diverse cultures in their cooking class, and purchase food from other cultures in the canteen
- The 3/4 classes will learn about sustainability by looking at composting systems and food waste
- The signs advertising the daily canteen menu are a purposeful addition connected to our literacy program

MPS is a Move Well, Eat Well school and a lead 24 Carrot Project school, demonstrating our holistic, whole-school approach to embedding healthy habits for life. Our commitment to ongoing professional learning for staff through the SAKG Program and 24 Carrot Garden Project will ensure that curriculum links continue to be developed. The connections that students are making between their kitchen, garden and classroom learning, and the range of ‘real’, seasonal food now available to them in their new, healthy kitchen-based canteen, all contribute to building a positive and vibrant culture around food at MPS.
Linking with Home and Community

Celebrating our diverse cultures through food

At MPS we celebrate our multicultural community. We actively seek input from our diverse cultures to connect with the food that families enjoy at home. Families are encouraged to share recipes from their culture and share their food knowledge in cooking classes, and these dishes are incorporated into the termly canteen menu and offered to students as blackboard specials. The canteen will offer students and families ‘tastes’ of new and unfamiliar foods to broaden and enrich students’ food experiences and to celebrate the diverse food cultures and choices of our MPS families.

Engaging with Families in our LIFT and LiL Programs

Our LIFT (Learning in Families Together) and LiL (Launch into Learning) programs seek to link the learning that happens at school with learning at home. A key focus of the activities both these programs will offer to families this term will be around healthy food choices, and linking with our breakfast club and canteen. The kitchen will host parent sessions to support healthy lunch box preparation choices and educate families on how to minimise pre-packaged food, with families having the opportunity to learn to prepare some of the food offered in the canteen. MPS participates in the ‘What’s in your Lunchbox’ program which supports families in choosing healthy lunch-box items.

Term three’s LIFT Power Hour is a pizza party! Families are encouraged to join their children in the kitchen to participate in the literacy and numeracy learning that happens when you cook and share a pizza.
MPS `Seasons at Moonah’ Recipe Book

We are creating a recipe book with 100 favourite recipes from our kitchen garden program and canteen, decorated with beautiful fruit and vegetable illustrations created by students. The recipe book will enable students and families to replicate the dishes that students have prepared and shared in their Kitchen cooking classes, and in doing so link their school food learning with the cooking that happens at home.

Engaging with the community

Volunteers and supporters play an invaluable role in the success of our kitchen garden program, and every year we recognise their contribution with an al fresco long table lunch in the garden. The Canteen menu is promoted to families through the weekly newsletter and through social media, and we monitor feedback from families regarding the food being offered. We are connecting with our Aboriginal community through the employment of an Aboriginal Education Worker who will collaborate with the Garden and Kitchen Specialist to incorporate bushfoods into the Kitchen Garden Program. MPS engages with the wider community with fundraising enterprises, which include making preserves from excess produce, which students sell at our annual stall at the Moonah Taste of the World Festival, and hosting regular fundraising Celebrity Chef Dinners, which features a renowned local chef who works with students and creates a menu featuring produce from the school garden.
Our canteen is aiming for a zero waste policy for food packaging. We have eliminated all pre-packaged food and single-use packaging, including bottled drinks. This has led to significant reductions in the amount of plastic littering our school playground. All the food offered in the canteen is handmade from scratch using fresh produce, and we have stopped using single-use food serving containers and switched to biodegradable containers, which we will incorporate into our composting systems in the garden.

An integral part of our program’s sustainability is our whole-school composting system. Students collect food scraps from cooking classes, the canteen and every classroom daily. The waste (or resource, as we like to think of it!) is deposited into one of the four compost bins installed in our garden beds, or chopped up finely and put in one of our four worm farms. The rich compost, worm castings and juice we collect are put back into the garden to enrich our soil.

The food grown in our school garden and used in kitchen classes and canteen is grown with the shortest possible food miles - none! Our garden receives the compost we make at school in our large compost bays and bins and the rainwater we collect in two large tanks connected to the kitchen roof.
Today's $1 Special

Homemade breast nuggets
Pumpkin & Silverbeet Pizza Muffins