

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Working Party

Report and recommendations to Westgarth PS School Council



Westgarth Primary School
Safe, Fair & Friendly



National Program

Growing Harvesting Preparing Sharing

Terms of reference

The objective of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program is to:

- Introduce pleasurable food education to children during their learning years, in order to form positive food habits for life
- Change the way children approach and think about food by having them participate in hands-on gardening and cooking classes, giving them the skills and understanding they need to enjoy a lifelong, positive relationship with food that extends to the family and school community
- Improve children's knowledge and confidence in relation to growing, preparing, cooking and eating food
- Reinforce academic, social, personal and collaborative learning across all curriculum areas via the kitchen and garden spaces.

1. Role/Purpose of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Working Party

The role of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Working Party (SAKGWP) will be to make recommendations to School Council and/or Principal (whichever appropriate) based on its review and findings in relation to the benefits and costs to Westgarth Primary School. This will include a review of the program rationale, the kitchen and garden curriculums (both visible and hidden), financial contributions by parents (compared to overall costs) as well as feedback about the value of program – both extrinsic and intrinsic.

2. Term of the Working Party

The SAKGWP will be established by School Council in February 2017. The terms of reference are effective from this time and will continue until the date it makes recommendations to School Council for approval.

3. Membership

- Principal class member (convener)
- A member of the finance committee
- Three staff members (including SAKG staff)
- Three parent members
- Two co-opted members approved by School Council.

4. Methodology

A. Program rationale and Curriculum review

- (i) A review of the program rationale, the kitchen and the garden programs will be undertaken to determine the robustness of links to the Victorian Curriculum (i.e., curriculum mapping) and determine whether the skills and concepts taught explicitly reinforce and/or enrich classroom and specialists teaching and learning programs.
- (ii) A review of the program's so called 'hidden curriculum' will be undertaken to determine to ascertain the social, personal and collaborative learning that the program supports

B. Complete financial audit

A complete financial audit of the program in terms of income and outgoings will be completed in partnership with the Business Manager.

C. Parent and staff survey

A mixed methods design will be adopted. It will use quantitative responses (on a 10-point Likert scale) and qualitative responses regarding the extrinsic and intrinsic value of the program.

5. Meetings

All meetings will be chaired by the convener. A meeting quorum will be half the members. Decisions will be made by consensus or in the absence of consensus by majority vote.

6. Reporting

A report on progress will be given at each School Council meeting and feedback on interim recommendations will be sought. There will be ongoing communication with the school community regarding progress.

7. Timing

Recommendations will be presented to School Council in 2017.

8. Amendment

Terms of reference may be amended in writing by agreement by members and with approval of School Council.

The evidence of kitchen garden programs

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKGP) program has been running at Westgarth Primary School since 2007. The program currently operates from mid-Year 3 until mid-Year 6 where the students receive 100 minutes of kitchen and up to 100 minutes of garden program per week on a fortnightly rotation.

Research on the program and its outcomes has shown many benefits for individual students and the broader school community. From a research perspective, the program increases student engagement and confidence and provides greater opportunities for experiential and integrated learning. It also builds teamwork and develops students' capacity for building social skills and connections. Further, it increases students' willingness to try new foods, improves healthy eating choices and advances students' kitchen skills, such that they are more likely to be preparing food independently at home. The acquisition of food preparation skills, in particular, correlates with ongoing healthy eating and low incidence of adult obesity.



Other benefits of school-based cooking and gardening programs, not specific to the SAKG program, include positive effects in the areas of science achievement and social and environmental behaviours. Participating in school garden programs has been shown to enhance psychosocial wellbeing, specifically with regard to self-confidence and esteem. There is emerging research that suggests that contact with nature improves students' attention span and self-discipline, and may improve the behaviour of disruptive students. More generally, time spent outside has been shown to reduce feelings of anger, fatigue, anxiety and sadness. Research has demonstrated that community gardening has a particularly beneficial impact on self-restoration because it combines time in nature with positive social connections and physical activity.

The SAKG program is a community program in that it relies upon adult volunteers. This provides additional community benefits such as promoting connections between children and adults and between schools and communities. Westgarth's SAKG program provides our children with invaluable opportunities to learn and grow, both intellectually and emotionally.



Report and data analysis

There were 109 survey responses (out of 422 families) – with 62.38% of responders indicating that their eldest child was in Year 4 or above – and, therefore, had a child who completed at least one full year of the SAKG program.

Department of Education and Training (DET) policy, for a time, allowed greater flexibility of parent/carer choice with regard to student enrolment. As such, 53.22% of parents and carers indicated that the SAKG program was an important or extremely important factor in them choosing to send their child to Westgarth. However, as the school now has an enrolment ceiling, and the current school enrolment policy states, “Students for whom WPS is not the closest school will generally not be enrolled”¹, the weight of this statistic is of less consequence.

Parent carer value and satisfaction of the program

Parents and carers value the SAKG program for its teaching of sustainability, practical gardening and kitchen skills as well as the promotion of confidence, engagement, healthy eating, resilience and mental health. They are satisfied that the program delivers in all areas, although resilience and mental health have a slightly lower level of satisfaction. The program itself, as well as the work of the kitchen garden staff, is acknowledged as a significant factor in achieving high levels of parent/carer satisfaction:

This is a fabulous program. It encourages healthy eating and understanding of where food comes from ... Mary and Virginia are so dedicated to the program and the students. It is a pleasure to volunteer with them both.

The majority of parent and carer respondents believe the optimal time for running Westgarth’s SAKG program is from mid-Year 3 until mid-Year 6. However, from an organisational perspective the current arrangements are problematic (e.g., having both start and mid-year inductions, and the number of volunteers significantly lessens in upper primary). Streamlining this process (that is, having only a single induction program for volunteers at the start of the year) is a more efficient use of the program specialists’ time. In addition, the curriculum links are stronger and the extracurricular demands are fewer in the middle primary years of schooling.

Offering a ‘program-lite’ (modified, age-appropriate program) for students in Prep – Year 2 was suggested. However, there would need to be a reduction in the number of weeks for students currently participating in the program due to timetabling constraints and so this was not considered a viable option. Nevertheless, exploring ways to integrate the garden program with Prep – Year 2 classes could be investigated to maximise use of this valuable school resource and to assist with program induction and student transition from Brooke to Clarke Street.



The program is promoted in the school’s newsletter and on its website² – with the latter including recipes that students have made. This is a means of addressing parent/carer requests such as:

What would be good is if the child came home with the recipes each fortnight as we then try and make them the weekend after she has made them at kitchen garden ... Would be good if the recipes could come home, [my daughter] frequently wants to reproduce something at home but can't remember exactly how to make it.

¹ http://wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded_files/media/enrolment.pdf

² [http://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/page/180/Stephanie-Alexander-Kitchen-Garden-\(SAKG\)](http://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/page/180/Stephanie-Alexander-Kitchen-Garden-(SAKG))

Curriculum audit and review

A review of the SAKG Foundation curriculum matrix³ suggests that the program is all-encompassing and addresses a vast number of the Victorian Curriculum's content descriptions. A closer analysis of the matrix suggests that a number of the curricular links are perhaps tenuous (e.g., the links to Dance) and that the thematic approach does not always address the content description in the way that they were necessarily intended. For example, in History at levels 3 and 4, students need to learn about the history of our nation's first people and European settlement. The SAKG Foundation curriculum resource for History at levels 3 and 4 suggests:

Look at newspaper advertisements from your area from 1920, 1950 and 1970 (your State Library should have collections online). What foods are being advertised? How does that compare to today?

An independent audit of the Victorian Curriculum by Working Party members showed that the strongest primary curricular links⁴ were in the areas of Design and technology, Health and Science with secondary curricular links⁵ being possible in areas such as English and Mathematics – and that these links were strongest in levels 3 and 4.

Opportunities to support classroom-based learning exist below the current offering of mid-Year 3 with scope for program links to be made in lower primary.

Extra-curricular demands⁶ on students in upper primary school classes are acknowledged and, with the addition of the kitchen-garden program, it can be difficult to 'fit everything in'.

The program staff endeavour to support and reinforce the school's Spanish program; for example, concluding classes with the students thanking the volunteers in Spanish. The kitchen specialist also has students offering food to one another using Spanish phrasing; for example, 'Quieres?' (Do you want?).

Some teachers (for example, Year 4 in 2016-17) have actively sought to create stronger curricular links between their classroom programs and the kitchen-garden. All classroom teachers have been provided with a copy of 'Food for thought: The mathematics of kitchen garden'⁷, as part of the school's *Teaching mathematics* professional development series, to better support these links. Opportunities to strength curriculum links between classroom programs and kitchen-garden are strongly encouraged moving forward.



³ https://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/sites/default/files/Files/Curriculum-Matrix%20Feb2015_watermark.pdf

⁴ Primary curriculum links address content specifically, and sometimes exclusively, taught by kitchen-garden staff as part of the SAKG program (e.g., investigating food preparation techniques; the importance of food safety and hygiene).

⁵ Secondary curriculum links provide opportunities for students to practise skills teachers have explicitly taught in the classroom (e.g., the classroom teacher explicitly teaches reading strategies and the SAKG program provides a context for reading with a purpose such as reading a recipe, or how to calculate the perimeter and area of rectangles and make connections to garden beds).

⁶ http://wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded_files/media/year_6_parent_info.pdf (Slide 3)

⁷ Lyon, A. and Bragg, L.A. (2011). Food for thought: The mathematics of kitchen garden. *Australian Primary Mathematics Classroom* 16(1), 25-32, Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers.

Financial audit and review

The number of students serviced by the program has increased over time. Just over 80 more students participated in 2017 (370) compared to 2013 (289) as reflected by the school's growing population.

Unlike camps, excursions and in-school activities where students may be excluded from participating due to non-payment⁸, the kitchen-garden program is inclusive of all students. Financial hardship or parent choice with regard to non-payment of the essential and/or voluntary contribution is not a determining factor in program participation for students.

Essential contributions to the program (used to pay for consumable items such as food, seeds and plants) have remained constant at 90%. Essential contributions currently cover the full cost of consumable items for the program.



Voluntary contributions (used to subsidise salaries and program infrastructure such as tools and equipment) has fallen from 83% down to 71%. Voluntary contributions currently do *not* cover the full cost of non-consumable items (that is, salaries, tools and equipment) for the program.

Although operating expenses (consumable items, infrastructure and salaries) have increased over time, the growth in student numbers has meant that the program has become more financially viable on a 'cost-per-student' basis – falling from \$222.95 to \$204.43.

While the kitchen-garden program is not necessarily intended to be self-funding through parent contributions, the combined operating loss of \$222 939 for 2013-2017 (an average shortfall of \$135.62 per student) does not appear to be financially sustainable.

A means for addressing the program's financial shortfall is the possibility of parents and carers making additional financial contributions and/or investing in the program prior to their child's commencement. Of the parents and carers who completed the survey:

- 75.3% of Year 3 – 6 respondents were willing to make additional financial contributions
- 88.9% of Prep – Year 2 respondents were willing to invest in the program/make a donation.

Of the Year 3 – 6 respondents willing to increase their financial contribution, they indicated preparedness to pay at least an additional \$75 (covering 25% of the program shortfall). Of the Prep – Year 2 respondents, parents/carers were willing to invest/donate at least \$35 prior to their child starting the program.

A possible model for future essential and voluntary contributions is shown in Appendix 1 for consideration.

Greater financial transparency and education of the school community in relation to the program may assist in reducing monetary shortfalls in the future as suggested by several survey respondents.

Seeking local and/or corporate sponsorship may be another means for reducing the program's financial shortfall. Although the vast majority of respondents were not in a position to directly facilitate a partnership or sponsorship arrangement, a number of suggestions were made and are worthy of future investigation. The school's Donations policy⁹ and Advertising and sponsorship policy¹⁰ would need to be adhered to should this be a path that the School Council intends to pursue.

⁸ http://wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded_files/media/excursions_and_in_school_activities.pdf

⁹ http://wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded_files/media/donations.pdf

¹⁰ http://wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded_files/media/advertising_and_sponsorships.pdf

Tax deductibility options to support the purchase of program equipment and infrastructure is not possible under current tax laws. Schools can only have library and building funds – that latter of which the school currently has in place. If more money was invested into the building fund by parents/carers, then other monies could be ‘freed up’ for program equipment and infrastructure.

Some survey respondents suggested the possibility of parents/carers ‘offsetting’ their SAKG financial contributions in exchange for volunteering in the program. However, this was not considered a viable option due to the administrative and operational demands such an option would create.

Volunteers

Parents and carers volunteer in the kitchen and garden programs for a variety of reasons but predominantly because they want to be involved in the school and they want to support the program.

Volunteers are generally inducted into the program at the start of the school year. Currently, a mid-year intake of students (Year 3) has meant that a second volunteer induction is required which has been problematic from an organisational perspective.



Ideally, the kitchen-garden staff need four volunteers for each of the twelve classes that operate each week (that is, at least 48 volunteers – not accounting for illnesses). Volunteers generally volunteer for either the kitchen or the garden program – meaning at least 96 volunteers are needed for optimal program delivery. However there are often volunteer ‘shortfalls’ due to a variety of factors such as work/study commitments, caring for younger children, volunteering elsewhere in the school, the time of day that the program takes place, their child is currently not in the program and/or not knowing that they could volunteer if their child was not participating in the program (that is, pre mid-Year 3).

The majority of volunteers for the program are/have been at Year 3 and 4 – with most of these parents and carers wanting to only help in their child’s class. Kitchen-garden staff report, as is supported by the data, it is difficult to source volunteers for the upper primary classes. For example, in 2017 there were only two regular and four occasional volunteers to cover the four Year 6 classes in the kitchen program.

Human resource shortfalls are often addressed through community volunteers (e.g., grandparents, former parents, interested members of the broader community) although they take time to recruit and maintain. It is acknowledged that community volunteers are of enormous value and offer another dimension and richness to the program. Also of note is that over three-quarters of parents and carers (76.47%) who had previously volunteered their time would consider volunteering with the program again.

Survey respondents indicated that casual and after hours volunteering opportunities (e.g., weekend gardening) would assist them in being able to support the program.

Kitchen-garden staff have embraced an online volunteer management tool (Geddup) to maximise these opportunities and to extend their pool of volunteers. They already have over 25 new volunteers for the 2018 program by reaching out to Prep – Year 2 families.

Other suggestions, such as the program only being implemented at the start or end of the school day to better support working parents wishing to volunteer their time, were not considered practical from neither a logistical or timetabling perspective.

Recommendations to School Council

Curriculum and program implementation recommendations¹¹

1. The school to build stronger curriculum links between classroom programs and the kitchen-garden.
2. The school to begin the program at the start of Year 3 and conclude it at the end of Year 5.

Financial recommendations

3. The school to increase financial transparency and education for parents and carers with regard to the actual cost of the program and its financial shortfalls.
4. The finance sub-committee of School Council to review and address financial shortfalls. This may include consideration of:
 - Increasing voluntary contributions
 - Investment by parents and carers for students not currently in the program
 - Donations by parents and carers willing to financially support the program further.
5. The finance sub-committee of School Council to investigate local and/or corporate partnership arrangements, in line with DET and school policies, to offset financial shortfalls.

Volunteer recommendations

6. Kitchen-garden staff to continue to use the online volunteer management tool (Geddup) to maximise permanent and casual volunteering opportunities, and to extend the current pool of volunteers.
7. The school to establish a 'Friends of SAKG' group who can:
 - Roster and source permanent and casual kitchen and garden volunteers within and beyond the school community
 - Organise routine working bees for the garden (e.g., on a monthly basis)
 - Coordinate the donation, in advance, of food items and other consumables (e.g., seeds) on a rotational basis
 - Source possible local and/or corporate partnership arrangements, in line with DET and school policies.



¹¹ Curriculum and program implementation are operational decisions made by school staff.

Survey responses

Survey respondents

Year level	Response (percentage)	Response (number)
Prep	6.24%	7
Year 1	5.50%	6
Year 2	6.24%	7
Year 3	19.27%	21
Year 4	22.94%	25
Year 5	22.02%	24
Year 6	17.43%	19
Total		109

How important was the SAKG program in your selection of WPS for your child's education?

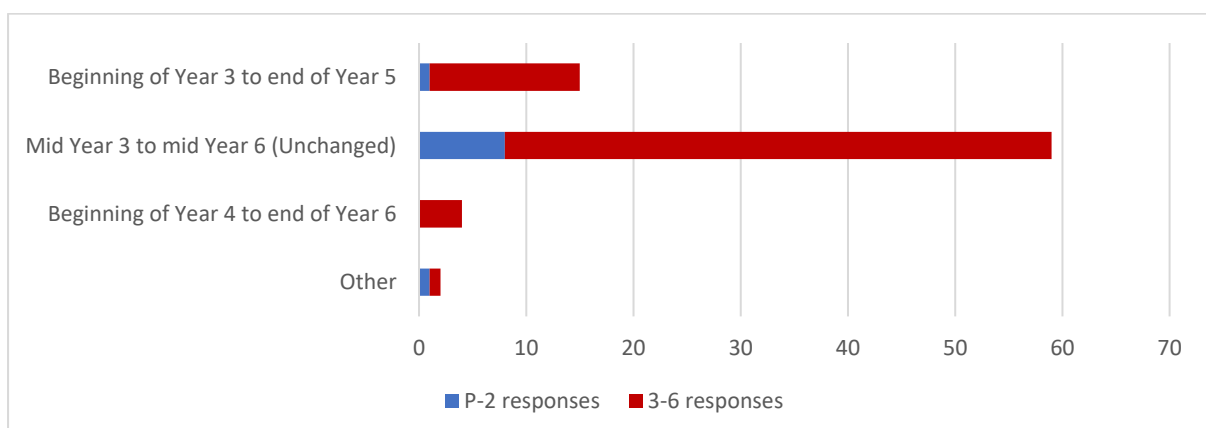
Year level	No response	Extremely unimportant	Unimportant	Neither important or unimportant	Important	Extremely important
Prep	3	1	1	3		
Year 1			1	1	3	1
Year 2			2	2	3	
Year 3	2		1	6	8	4
Year 4		3		5	7	10
Year 5	3	2	1	6	5	7
Year 6	1	1	1	6	7	3
Total	9 (8.26%)	7 (6.42%)	7 (6.42%)	29 (26.61%)	33 (30.28%)	25 (22.94%)

What is the optimal three-year period in which students should participate in the program?

Options	Prep-Year 2 responses	Year 3-6 responses
I have no opinion	8	11
Beginning of Year 3 to end of Year 5	1	14
Mid-Year 3 to mid-Year 6 (Unchanged)	8	51
Beginning of Year 4 to end of Year 6	0	4
Other	1	1

Other responses include:

- As early as possible (2)



Program timing comments include:

- As students become teenagers, disengagement becomes more prevalent and healthy eating is more important (and more neglected). Consider making it a Year 6 elective?
- By time the students are in Year 6, they are looking for other challenges at primary school and getting ready to move on.
- I think the commencement of the classes when the children move to the “big campus” signifies a “coming of age” for the children. Leave it as is, allowing the children time to settle before commencing.
- I don't think a change of a couple of terms is going to make a big difference.
- Definitely not starting in [Year] 4. [Year] 3s arrive on the big side yet nothing else changes. They need this!
- The class is more mature in [Year] 4 - easier for volunteers to assist.

CURRICULUM AUDIT AND REVIEW

Victorian Curriculum audit

Primary curriculum links address content specifically, and sometimes exclusively, taught by kitchen/garden staff as part of the SAKG program (e.g., investigating food preparation techniques; the importance of food safety and hygiene).

Secondary curriculum links provide opportunities for students to practice skills classroom teachers have explicitly taught in the classroom (e.g., the classroom teacher explicitly teaches reading strategies and the SAKG provides a context for reading with a purpose such as reading a recipe).

	Prep		Year 1		Year 2	
	Primary links	Secondary links	Primary links	Secondary links	Primary links	Secondary links
English	1	1	2	1	2	1
Health (& PE)	3		2		2	
Humanities		2		2		2
Mathematics		2		2		3
Science		5		5		5
Technologies	2	5	2	5	2	5
Intercultural capability						
Personal and social capability		2		2		2
Critical and creative thinking		2		2		2
Subtotal	5	20	6	19	6	20
Total	25		25		26	

	Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6	
	Primary links	Secondary links	Primary links	Secondary links	Primary links	Secondary links	Primary links	Secondary links
English	1	7		5	1	6		6
Health (& PE)	3	4	3	4		5		5
Humanities		12		12		13		13
Mathematics		4		7		7		8
Science		13		13		6		6
Technologies	2	8	2	8	3	6	3	6
Intercultural capability		3		3		3		3
Personal and social capability		9		9		7		7
Critical and creative thinking		5		5		5		5
Subtotal	6	65	5	66	4	58	3	59
Total	71		71		62		62	

How important is it that the SAKG support your child/ren's learning in the following areas?

Prep – Year 2

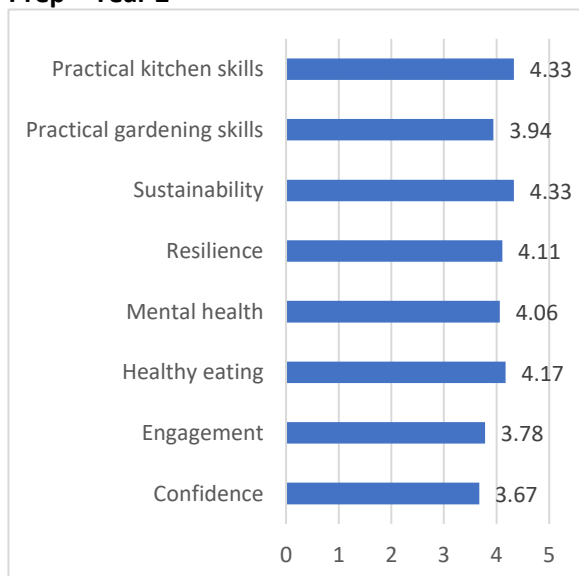
Program benefits	Extremely unimportant	Unimportant	Neither unimportant or important	Important	Extremely important
Confidence	2		3	10	3
Engagement	2	1		11	4
Healthy eating	1	1	1	6	9
Mental health	1	1	1	8	7
Resilience		1	3	7	7
Sustainability	1	1	1	3	12
Practical gardening skills	2		1	9	6
Practical kitchen skills	1	1		5	11

Years 3 – 6

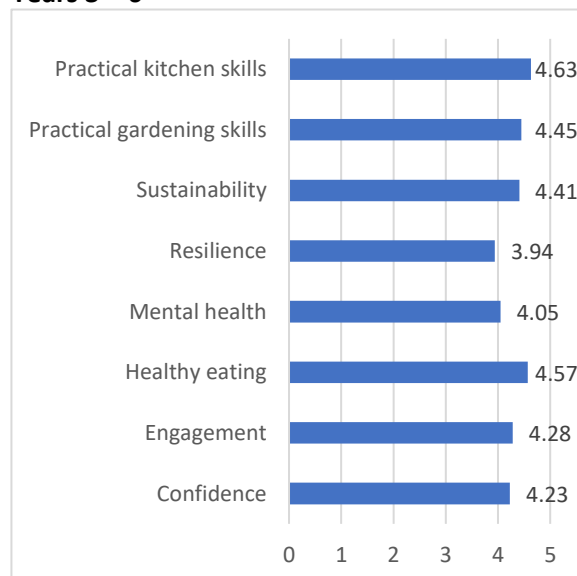
Program benefits	Extremely unimportant	Unimportant	Neither unimportant or important	Important	Extremely important
Confidence		1	9	42	30
Engagement	1		6	44	32
Healthy eating		1	3	27	52
Mental health	1	1	15	42	24
Resilience	1	2	20	38	22
Sustainability	1	1	1	40	40
Practical gardening skills	1		5	32	45
Practical kitchen skills	1			27	55

Program benefits: What parents value (Weighted survey responses)

Prep – Year 2



Years 3 – 6

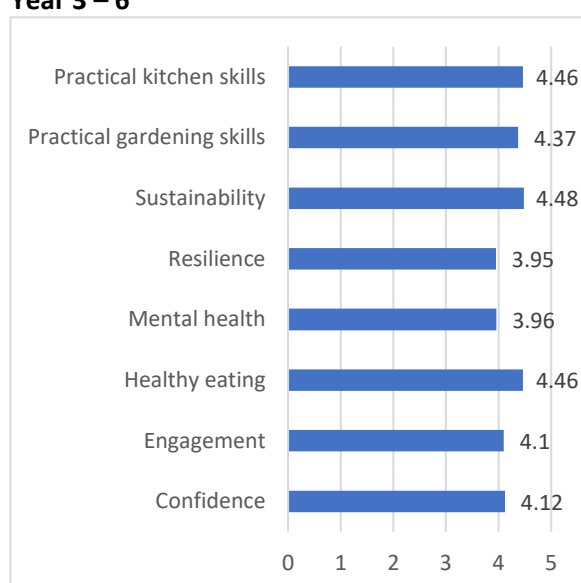


Years 3 – 6 Program benefit satisfaction

Program benefits	Extremely unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	Satisfied	Extremely satisfied
Confidence			18	35	28
Engagement	2	1	13	36	29
Healthy eating			8	28	45
Mental health		1	27	27	26
Resilience			30	25	26
Sustainability			5	31	43
Practical gardening skills		1	9	30	41
Practical kitchen skills		2	5	28	46

Program benefit parent satisfaction (Weighted survey responses)

Year 3 – 6



Comments about program benefits include:

- I think every school should have a kitchen garden program so children are taught the principles from garden to table and food preparation skills. These are life skills all children need to learn at an early stage.
- I think the kids get a great deal out of using kitchen tools and some kids carry through to do so at home. I think they should do more washing up too so they can do that at home too.
- It is important to have well-rounded children. Academic qualities are not enough, so hence importance to draw on other experiences to become well versed.
- The program enables students to learn in an environment different to the classroom. Having an opportunity to be outdoors, sharing meals with people in their class and volunteers, taking turns, trying new things, expanding knowledge and palate. I have watched students fully engaged and thoroughly enjoying their time in both garden and kitchen sessions. I also find my time volunteering in the program extremely rewarding.
- I don't want to see the program 'watered down'. I want my child to learn practical kitchen and gardening skills, not waste time in class drawing pictures. I want him to learn to chop, prepare and cook food and to dig, plant and weed in the garden.
- I don't currently believe it provides any real value to the kids.
- My views are based on my observations that the school has a community that largely supports healthy eating / exercise etc. at home and that there is not a huge need for a program like SAKG in a school like Westgarth given the demographic and socio economic profile of the community.

Financial audit and review

Operating expenses, financial contributions and shortfalls (2013 – 2017)

Year	No. of students	Operating expenses (salaries)	Cost per student	Parent contributions	SAKG charge per student	% of parent contributions	Shortfall overall (per student)
2013	289	\$64 434 (\$54 447)	\$222.95	\$10 480 (essential) \$9729 (voluntary)	\$40 (essential) \$40 (voluntary)	90% (essential) 83% (voluntary)	- \$44 234 (- \$153.05)
2014	327	\$62 088 (\$51 313)	\$189.87	\$12 195 (essential) \$12 600 (voluntary)	\$40 (essential) \$45 (voluntary)	95% (essential) 85% (voluntary)	- \$37 293 (- \$114.05)
2015	317	\$64 485 (\$57 029)	\$203.42	\$11 483 (essential) \$9177 (voluntary)	\$40 (essential) \$45 (voluntary)	93% (essential) 65% (voluntary)	- \$43 825 (- \$138.25)
2016	346	\$73 578 (\$63 467)	\$212.65	\$12 881 (essential) \$12 551 (voluntary)	\$40 (essential) \$50 (voluntary)	90% (essential) 73% (voluntary)	- \$48 146 (- \$139.15)
2017	370	\$75 642 (\$66 411)	\$204.43	\$13 211 (essential) \$12 990 (voluntary)	\$40 (essential) \$50 (voluntary)	90% (essential) 71% (voluntary)	- \$49 441 (- \$133.62)

The essential and the voluntary contributions for the SAKG program were both increased to \$50 in 2018.

Financial contributions

Financial contribution parents/carers would be willing/able to pay to invest in the SAKG program. Values shown below refer to the \$40 voluntary contribution (used to subsidise salaries and infrastructure such as tools and equipment), but not the \$50 essential levy (for consumable items such as food, seeds and plants) payable in 2017.

Preparedness to pay an increased financial contribution to invest in the program:

Year 3 – 6 responses

	Response (number)
Yes	61
No	20
Total responders	81

Increased amount prepared to pay:

Year 3 – 6 responses

	Response (number)
\$75 (covering 25% of the SAKG program shortfall)	15
\$109 (covering 50% of the SAKG program shortfall)	20
\$143 (covering 75% of the SAKG program shortfall)	3
\$177 (covering 100% of the SAKG program shortfall)	23
Total responders	61

Preparedness to make a financial contribution to invest in the SAKG program prior to a child/ren commencing in the program:

Prep – Year 2 responses

	Response (number)
Yes	16
No	2
Total responders	18

Amount prepared to pay/donate/invest prior program commencement:**Prep – Year 2 responses**

	Response (number)
\$35	3
\$70	5
\$105	0
\$140	5
Other	3
Total responders	16

Other amounts:

- \$50 (2)
- \$35 - \$50.

Comments related to financing the program

- I used to pay both the voluntary and essential components, however, as I also volunteered most years for both of my children (and ALWAYS had the 11am session every year, meaning I essentially lost most of the day's work time, thereby losing income) I started to feel that I was bearing a double load while other families were doing a lot less. Perhaps if you make it an either volunteer or pay situation might encourage more volunteers, or more payers!
- Please make any increased contribution compulsory. I'm getting a little tired of the same parents opting in to support the school with fete, reading, SAKG volunteering etc.
- If it was part of the normal fee structure we are asked to pay at the start of the year (as long as it was lower for parents of students not yet using the SAKG program), I probably would have paid it!
- The full cost of funding the program should be in the essential payment section.
- Before anyone commits to an increase in fee, I believe the school should publish/distribute SAKG financial reporting for review by school community.
- I don't believe parents know that the program needs more funds. It would be good to communicate this more.
- I'm experiencing some financial hardship at present so I am not in a position to contribute financially. So that is why I like to donate as much of my time as I can.
- If funding contributions are increased, I think they should be voluntary so families that can't afford to pay are still included in the program (not marginalised).
- It's a lovely program but I doubt many parents would realise the extent of the shortfall. I have to question whether that money would be better invested in other areas of the school like the basic curriculum of maths, science, literacy etc. WPS has a highly educated parent group whom I believe could teach their kids to cook & garden.
- The SAKG program is useful, and provides variety in curriculum, but not a critical part of learning (particularly in a relatively high socioeconomic demographic where kids often have parents who have kitchens/healthy food at home). If I was to contribute extra to the school, I'd prefer it be targeted at assisting programs to support disadvantaged students.
- Look if it's too costly to run and an indulgence ditch it. Or charge more. If the parents go bananas tough it out.
- I think that an ongoing corporate sponsorship partner(s) would alleviate the financial pressure of running the program. This could be companies related to food supplies, kitchen equipment or garden supplies.
- Fete makes so much that this should be used to fund the program.
- I could provide a yearly donation to the school being a local small business owner.

Questions related to financing the program

- Are financial contributions to the SAKG program tax deductible? (2)
- Can the program apply for DGR [deductible gift recipient] status?
- Would financial contributions go specifically to the Westgarth program?
- Is there any way some of the produce could be sold to school community? (Understand you may use it all in the program though.)
- Can we sell cooking classes to the community, in combination with SPAN community centre?

LOCAL AND CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

In a position to directly facilitate a donation/community partnership with the SAKG program?

Options	Prep-Year 2 responses	Year 3-6 responses
Not in a position to directly facilitate a partnership	17	70
Source volunteers from the wider Westgarth comm.		
Corporate volunteering		2
Donation of food	2	9
Donation of equipment		2
Provision of professional knowledge / expertise		3
Other	1	4

Other suggestions

- Only on a personal/limited capacity (4)
- If one class was allocated each week and a list of items required was provided we could sign up online to donate one item from the list (could be food items or garden items). This would be a small, infrequent cost to parents and would make a big difference to the running cost of the program

In a position to facilitate a company sponsorship?

	Prep-Year 2 responses	Year 3-6 responses
Yes	0	4
No	16	57

Suggestions for company sponsorship

- Link SAKG with a corporate sponsorship(e.g., NAB, Body Shop)
- Rotary or Lions Club
- School/park partnership with Parks Victoria and/or local Yarra Bend Park
- Northcote Nursery
- CERES
- Telstra kids donates money and equipment to schools and children's programs
- Deakin University
- Current parents (e.g., Matt Wilkinson & Jessie Gerner)
- Farmers' market left overs
- Northcote and Fairfield shops and restaurants

Suggestions for volunteers

- Link SAKG with industry re volunteers (e.g., William Angliss)
- Grandparents and local retired neighbours (intergenerational programs)
- Ex WPS parents
- Work experience placements for secondary students.

VOLUNTEERING

Why would you/do you volunteer your time to support the SAKG program?

Prep – Year 2

Reason for volunteering	Response (number)
I have a passion for gardening	6
I have a passion for cooking	7
I have expertise in gardening	4
I have expertise in cooking	3
I want to support the program	13
I want to be involved in my child's school	16
I currently have time to volunteer	3
Other	0
Total responders	17

Year 3 – 6

Reason for volunteering	Response (number)
I have a passion for gardening	9
I have a passion for cooking	13
I have expertise in gardening	2
I have expertise in cooking	6
I want to support the program	26
I want to be involved in my child's school	31
I currently have time to volunteer	9
Other	4
Total responders	33

Other reasons for volunteering include:

- An opportunity to meet/know my child's peers
- Assisting in a practical way
- As a means for increasing my child's engagement at school/home
- Value the program

Have you ever volunteered your time for the SAKG program?

Prep – Year 2

	Response (number)
I have never volunteered	16
I have previously volunteered but currently do not	2
I currently volunteer	0
No response	2
Total	20

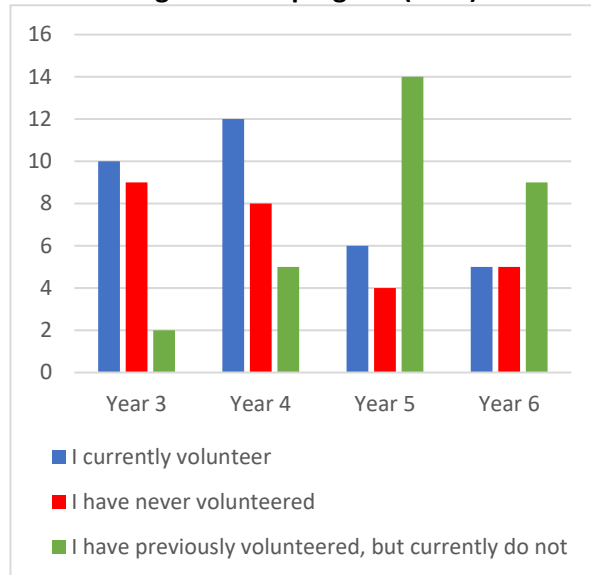
Other comments

- Did not know that I could volunteer for another class when my child is below Year 3 (2)

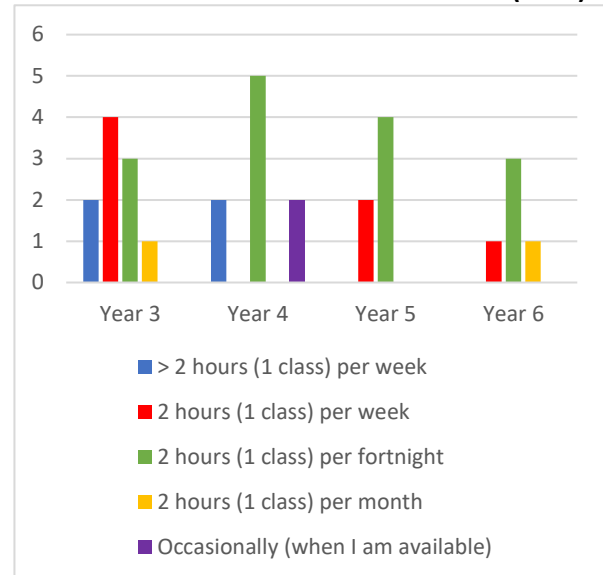
Years 3 – 6

	Response (number)
I have never volunteered	26
I have previously volunteered but currently do not	30
I currently volunteer	33
Total	89

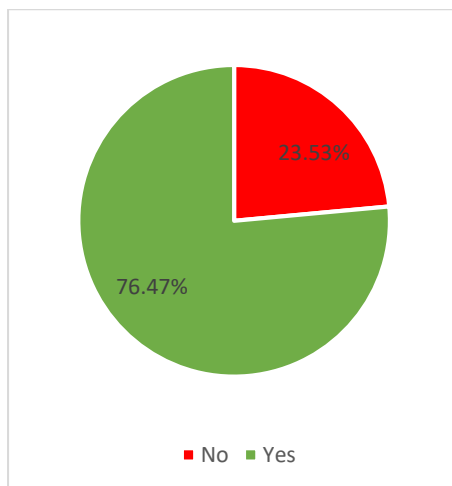
Volunteering for SAKG program (3 – 6)



Time commitment of current volunteers (3 – 6)



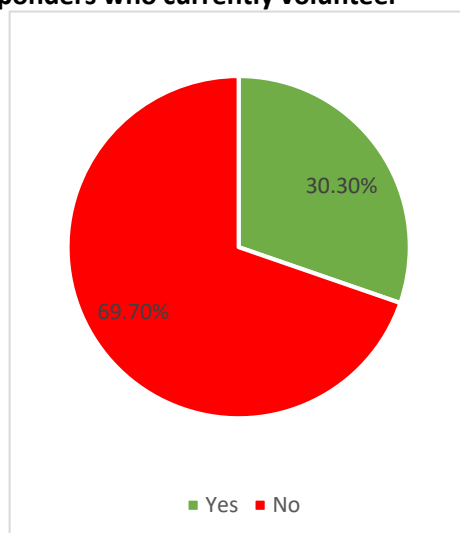
Would you consider volunteering your time again for the program? (Previous volunteers)



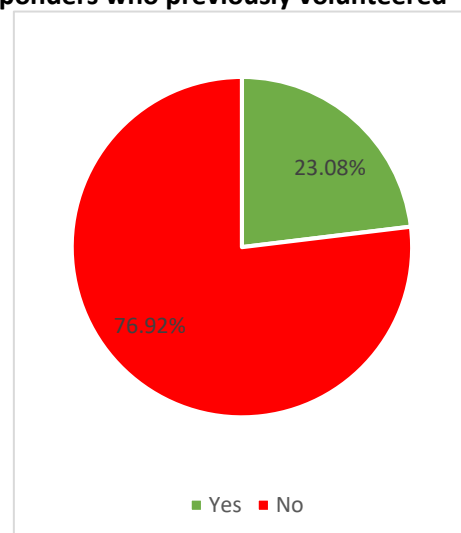
Would you consider volunteering your time in a class other than your own child's for SAKG?

Years 3 – 6

Responders who currently volunteer

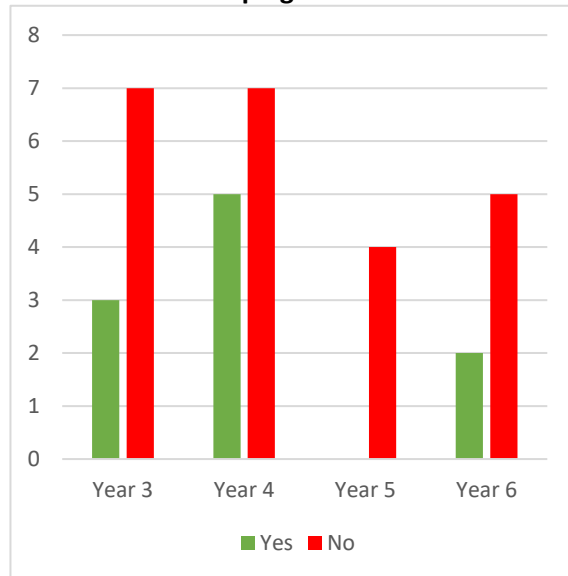


Responders who previously volunteered

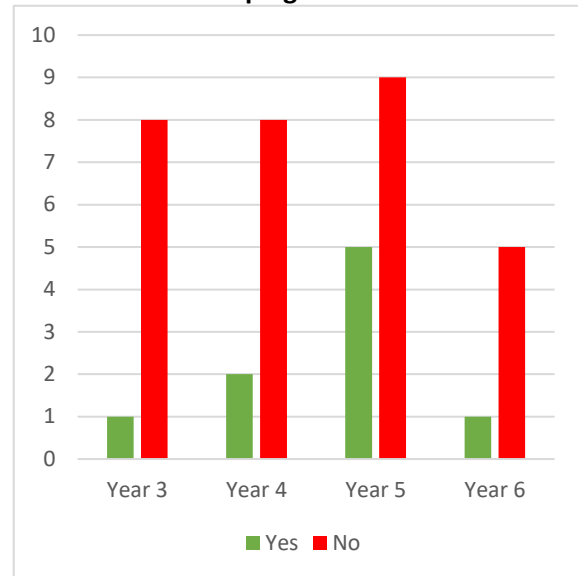


Years 3 – 6

Responders who currently volunteer who would consider helping in another class



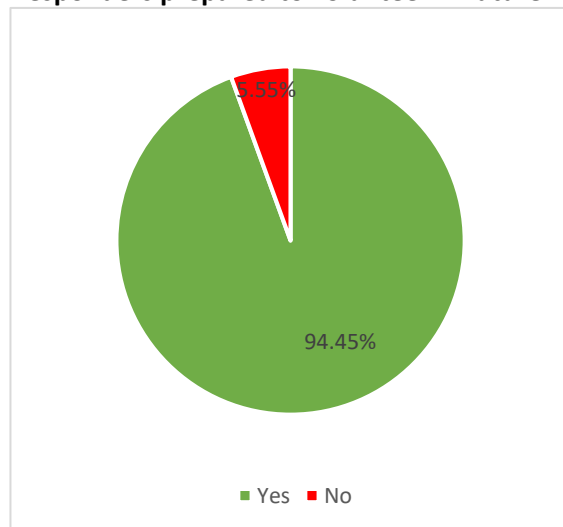
Responders who previously volunteered who would consider helping in another class



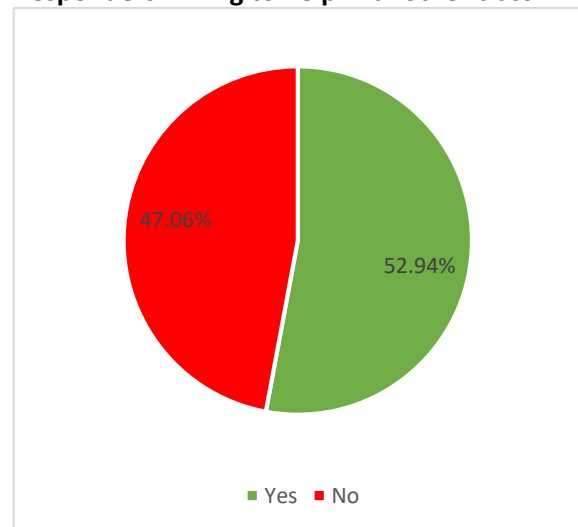
Would you consider volunteering your time in the future for the SAKG program?

Prep – Year 2

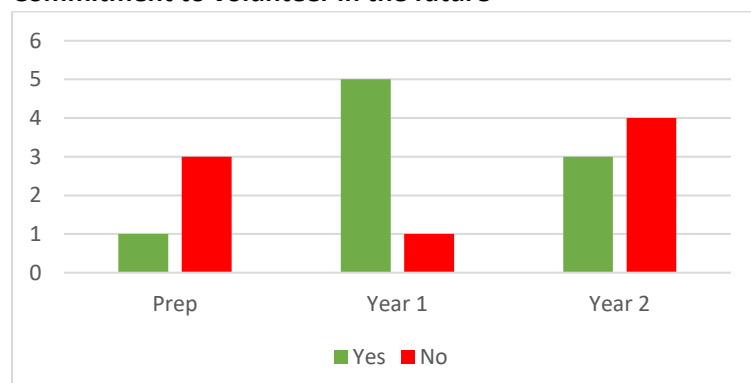
Responders prepared to volunteer in future



Responders willing to help in another class

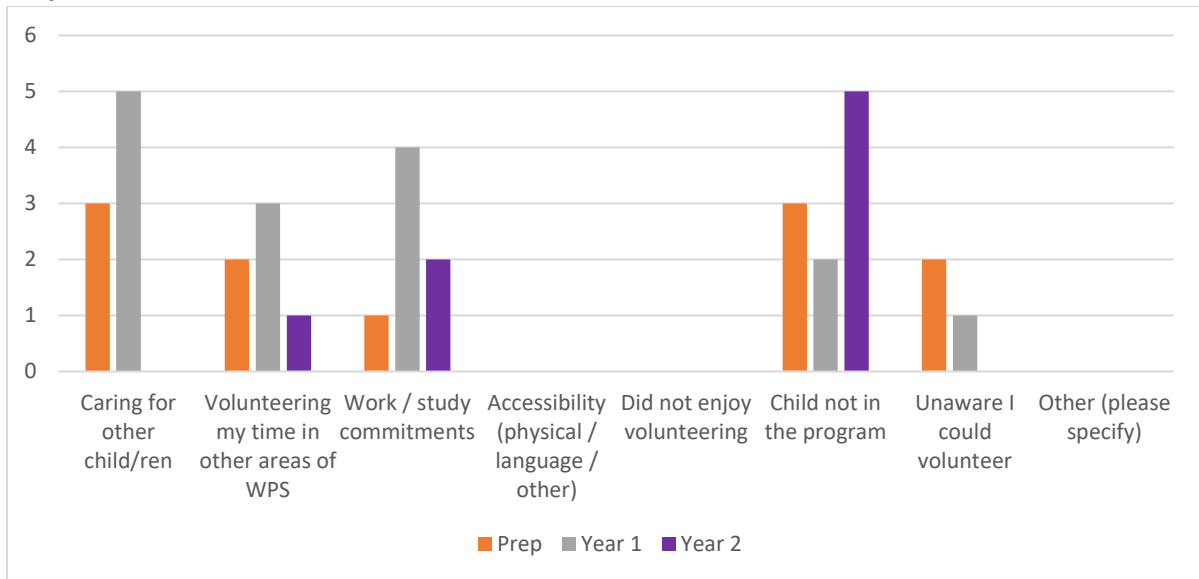


Commitment to volunteer in the future

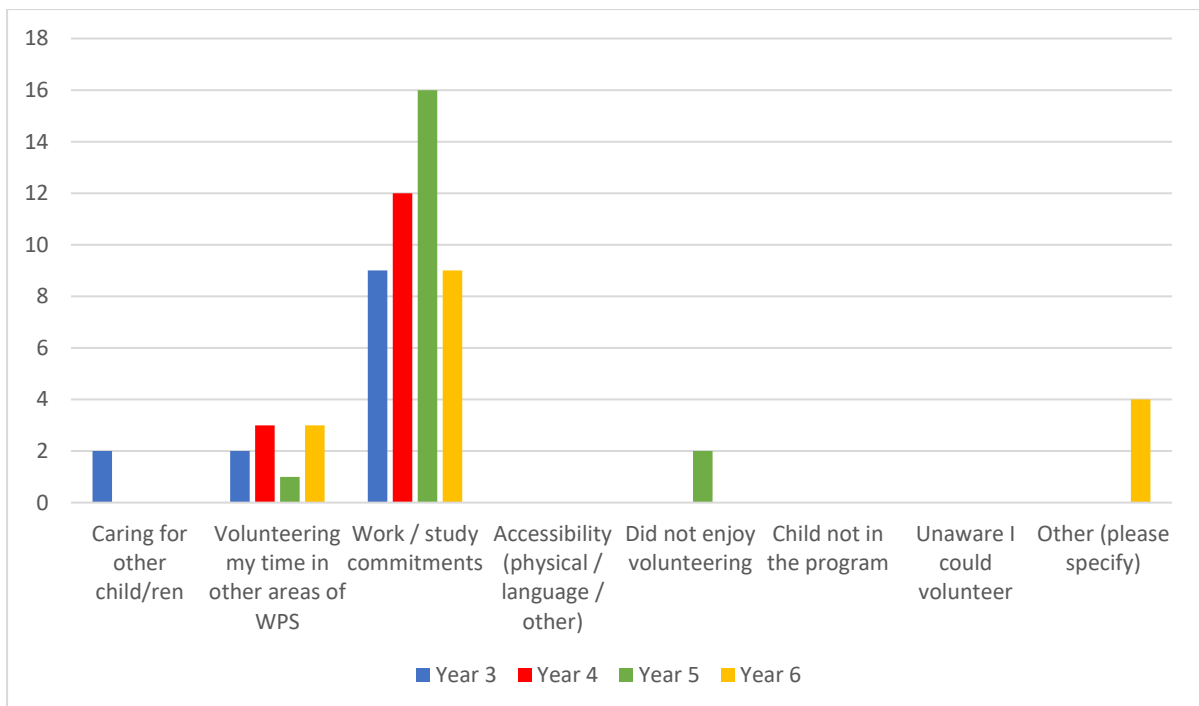


**What factors contribute to you not volunteering your time to support the SAKG program?
(For those indicating that they do not volunteer/no longer volunteer)**

Prep – Year 2



Years 3 – 6



**Which of the following would most help you support the SAKG program?
(For those indicating that they do not volunteer/no longer volunteer)**

Prep – Year 2

Reason/s	Response (number)
Nothing would help	3
Casual volunteering opportunities	10
Increased communication (e.g. FlexiBuzz)	4
More regular volunteer induction	2
After hours volunteering (e.g., weekend gardening roster)	6
Specific volunteer drives (e.g., Volunteer week)	4
Other	1
Total responders	17

Other responses include:

- Making program available at younger levels

Years 3 - 6

Reason/s	Response (number)
Nothing would help	7
Casual volunteering opportunities	18
Increased communication (e.g. FlexiBuzz)	1
More regular volunteer induction	1
After hours volunteering (e.g., weekend gardening roster)	9
Specific volunteer drives (e.g., Volunteer week)	9
Other	11
Total responders	39

Other responses include:

- Program coinciding with day/s off work (6)
- Program coinciding with beginning/end of the day (2)
- More people volunteering/sharing the workload (2)
- Lack of confidence/lack of interest in cooking
- Better student management
- Volunteering is rewarding, but is hard work. More support from staff would help. Perhaps shorter volunteering times. Young kids, stoves, knives & lots of energy is exhausting to supervise. It is a lot for a volunteer to manage

Additional comments and feedback

General comments

Please don't get rid of this program, as this is our next generation's first contact with food selection, preparation and consumption, giving them life skills with something that most adults still can't manage or enjoy properly.
Don't get rid of this program. Food speaks where language can't, expresses diversity when people can't and gives ordinary people the gift of self-esteem when all other skills have been exhausted. Give our children this gift.
I think it is positive to have children taught by subject specialists rather than teaching professionals- as much as we love them- during their school experience. An entirely different approach and emphasis that facilitates a different type of learning that links to real life. I think the programme is very much characteristic of Westgarth and in many ways sets the tone for a lot of the school's other activities. It actually 'does' what gets talked about elsewhere. It is a bridge between home and school life, which is much more of a two way process than possibly any other part of a child's school day. It provides a scope for a different range of skills and aptitudes to be developed and ultimately shine, outside of the usual screen/book/desk - work that may not turn up as a progressing 'dot' on a report but contributes directly to a child's overall personnel development. It can be a real challenge to children who have very little practical confidence in an increasingly virtual and remote world.
It is important to have well-rounded children. Academic qualities are not enough, so hence importance to draw on other experiences to become well versed.
It's a great forum to learn life skills.
Knowledge and skills for healthy eating and living (mental health benefits from being outdoors and connecting with the natural world) provided at a young age can only have positive outcomes for children.
I would like to support the program more but am constrained by full time work hours. It's very important to me though and was one of the main reasons why I initially selected WPS so am very keen for it to continue through both my children's schooling (am waiting for it to be the answer to all my seven year old's poor eating habits! ;-)) I would be happy to support the program in other ways, even if it was an additional cost.
The program enables students to learn in an environment different to the classroom. Having an opportunity to be outdoors, sharing meals with people in their class and volunteers, taking turns, trying new things, expanding knowledge and palate. I have watched students fully engaged and thoroughly enjoying their time in both garden and kitchen sessions. I also find my time volunteering in the program extremely rewarding.

Positive comments

It is a wonderful program. Amazing opportunity for kids to learn in an active hands on way. Great social benefits too - in relation to conversations had around the lunch table with the volunteers.
Great program, we are very lucky to have it at Westgarth and I hope we can help spread it to other schools.
The SAKG program is one of the jewels in the Westgarth PS crown of providing outstanding opportunities for its students.
This is a great program that needs to be continued and nurtured. Children are bombarded with unhealthy food choices (including at the WPS Fete!) so it is important that they learn about real food, their origin and benefits.
Children interacting in a non-competitive way, as happens with sport makes the SAKG program unique in that it is about working together in teams to produce or create something that is lovely to eat. But also the camaraderie developed at the table whilst sharing food and stories is remarkable. I cannot think of a group activity that is more pleasing to the senses, fostering positive feelings and connectedness.

Fantastic program! I was so impressed with the skills of the children when I volunteered. Volunteers were valued. Great the way everyone eats together at the end.
Gets the kids to try some foods without direct pressure from their parents. They can try new things if their friends encourage them or are trying things.
I encourage the school to continue the fine work they have put in place for past 10 years.
I have volunteered for several years with each of my children's classes. I have seen the learning, skills, reading, maths, discussion, engagement of children in the classes while participating in the kitchen or garden class. Children who may be shy, not sporty or anxious are offered opportunity in these classes to display different characteristics. The learning happens but so does the sharing of stories, experiences over the activity or while sharing food at the end of the class. The kitchen or garden teacher has to coordinate an amazing class and finish on time. Keep this class going.
I think this is a wonderful program. My daughter has on several occasions prepared meals for our family from what she has learned in terms of preparation, recipes and kitchen skills. She is always reminding me of the correct method of chopping and using knives safely. As a very keen gardener, and someone who is involved with the Horticulture sector I am always trying to teach my kids about nature and how to grow and look after plants - my daughters interest in this has markedly increased since participating in the kitchen garden program and she really looks forward to this part of her week.
My child loves the program. What would be good is if the child came home with the recipes each fortnight as we then try and make them the weekend after she has made them at kitchen garden. I would be happy to help with organising this if it is just a time/cost issue (vs copyright!).
My child was needing some serious stimulation and excitement by grade 3 and SKG has delivered in spades.
My son cooks confidently at home!
Really important to keep the program intact and employ people that can both cook and provide garden knowledge.
So far, my twins in grade 3 have already become more open to trying different food. Also, (so far!) they have enjoyed having me there as a volunteer.
Teaching practical life skills and understanding of process in achieving a goal.
The evidence of nature's effect on physical mental and social health is getting stronger all the time. Programs like this are a great step in the right direction for well-rounded education and life skills.
The preparation of a dish is important to learn all that goes into a dish and the sharing of what they produce.
The program is important to me because of the skills and interests it has fostered in my children. This program has broadened the foods my son is willing to eat and made him more willing to try new foods. He is also quite confident in the kitchen and helps with meal preparation at home. My daughter who was in the program earlier has become a very competent cook as she got older. The program gave her a great start and she rates it as so much better than the training she got at her high school.
The SAKG program provides a fantastic environment to learn skills that we are unable to provide at home. My child is exposed to not only new cooking experiences but is more accepting of trying new foods in a group environment and has access to a working garden.
This is a fabulous program. It encourages healthy eating and understanding of where food comes from. It's also an opportunity for parents to be helpful in the classroom. I have really enjoyed getting to support the teachers and getting to know the kids in my son's class. I have been impressed at how the kids respect and appreciate volunteers. Another valuable learning for them. Well done Mary and Virginia!!!
We eat pretty healthily at home and cook, so hard to tell what influence comes from the program, and what from home. Would be easier to assess impact with a household less into cooking/gardening/eating healthily.
While it wasn't a factor in choosing school for our kids now that my eldest has done it for a few years they really enjoy it and get a lot out of it and I want my youngest to get the same opportunities so SAKG program is important to us.

As E is in gr3, and the garden was moved this year, not so much 'normal' gardening has been done. Would be good if the recipes could come home, she frequently wants to reproduce something at home but can't remember exactly how to make it.
Best feedback is when my child comes home telling stories what they have done / made.
Haven't had much feedback from my grade 3 yet who has just started but she has learned how to use a knife properly and she ate tabbouleh for the first time which I think is pretty awesome.
I am extremely satisfied with the SAKG program.
I don't want to see the program 'watered down'. I want my child to learn practical kitchen and gardening skills, not waste time in class drawing pictures. I want him to learn to chop and prepare and cook food and to dig, plant and weed in the garden.
I have seen my reserved son show pride that he cooked something, or planted something, or participated with his classmates to make a dish to share. This can't be bought. Keep the program.
I love how my son talks about the food he enjoyed later at home. He talks with such zeal, and he is not normally that enthusiastic about food. The conversations he has with his fellow team members are recollected also. He seems to flourish by being very engaged with the program.
It is well done. Relies heavily on volunteers and the kitchen garden team.
Mary and Virginia are so dedicated to the program and the students. It is a pleasure to volunteer with them both.
My child is competent in the kitchen and garden and encourages the whole family to try new foods.
My child is more enthusiastic to cook real food at home not just caked and sweets.
My son has fantastic knife skills.
My son loves kitchen garden, and I am really proud of the skills he is learning and his engagement with food, the garden and sustainability more generally.
Our child regularly and confidently cooks meals for our whole family.
The program appears to be well received by both students and volunteers.
The SAKG program has definitely sparked an interest in food preparation in my child and many dishes have been replicated by my child at home for the family.
The teachers are fantastic and supportive, the volunteers that I have met are incredibly generous with their time and knowledgeable.

Possible areas for improvement

While I do not currently volunteer in the program I have previously. I have only ever worked in the kitchen so these comments relate solely to the kitchen. I have volunteered for a number of years both when Betty was there and also Mary. For me the program needs to be all about passion. Passion for the food, for the process, for the ingredients, for the skills that the kids will learn and a passion for the kids getting really involved in the process. As someone that has been in the classroom managed by two different teachers I just don't see that passion in the program anymore. My kids are not engaged like they once were and no longer look forward to the session. It was once the highlight of the week. If a class like this cannot ignite a kid's imagination and exploration then I am not sure that it has any real value.
Would be good if the kitchen also included a few very basic skills such how to cook rice/pasta etc.
In recent years the quality of cooking and the expedience of hurrying things on means the whole process is often overlooked, example cutlery has been dropped because there is too much cleaning up to do and students have to cook with pre-boiled potatoes, etc. and only do dressing. Real time has to be allocated.
In my experience the kitchen program often doesn't allow enough time for kids to have a turn at chopping/stirring etc., requires a lot of parental /volunteer supervision. Simpler recipes might make it easier for volunteers and enable kids to get a turn.
Children used to get to do all the work but too much was already prepared for them in the last 2 years and kids were bored and volunteers felt as if they were just babysitting

Appendix 1

All information below refers to voluntary contributions only. Voluntary contributions (used to subsidise salaries and program infrastructure such as tools and equipment) has fallen from 83% down to 71%. Voluntary contributions currently do *not* cover the full cost of non-consumable items (that is, salaries, tools and equipment) for the program.

Essential contributions to the program (used to pay for consumable items such as food, seeds and plants) have *not* been considered as part of this modelling. Essential contributions currently cover the cost of consumable items for the program.

TABLE 1: SURVEY RESPONSES

Responders willing to pay a voluntary contribution of:	Number	Percentage *
\$75 (covering 25% of the SAKG program shortfall)	15	75.0%
\$109 (covering 50% of the SAKG program shortfall)	20	57.0%
\$143 (covering 75% of the SAKG program shortfall)	3	32.0%
\$177 (covering 100% of the SAKG program shortfall)	23	28.0%
\$50 (unchanged)	20	25.0%
Total responders	81	100.0%

* Percentage reflects the percentage of responders willing to increase their voluntary contribution to **at least** the nominated amount; specifically, for example, a total of 61 responders out of 81 (75%) indicated a willingness to increase their voluntary contribution to **at least** \$75.00 per year.

TABLE 2: PREVIOUS VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS BY YEAR

Year	No. of students	Contribution per student	Contribution percentage	Total contribution
2015	317	\$45.00	65.0%	\$9177.00
2016	346	\$50.00	73.0%	\$12 551.00
2017	370	\$50.00	71.0%	\$12 990.00
2018	362	\$50.00	70.0%	\$12 670.00

Please note:

2018 figures are **projected**, based upon (a) student enrolments in years 3 to 6 as at the 2018 semester one census date (27 February 2018); and (b) an estimated payment of voluntary contributions by 70% of families in years 3 to 6.

Three possible voluntary contribution payment models are included to support the Finance sub-committee of School Council's review and potential for addressing the program's financial shortfalls.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS PAYMENT MODEL 1

Voluntary Contributions Payment Model 1 extrapolates survey responses over the entire population of year 3 to 6 students, applying a maximum payment of voluntary contributions by 70% of families in years 3 to 6; specifically, for example, 57.0% of responders nominated a voluntary contribution of **at least** \$109.00.

Voluntary Contributions Payment Model 1 assumes that the survey response is entirely representative of the population of year 3 to 6 families at Westgarth PS.

Voluntary contributions to SAKG program	No. of students	Contribution per student	Contribution percentage	Total contributions	Delta ¹² 2018 ¹³	Delta 2019 ¹⁴
\$50 (unchanged)	261	\$50.00	70.0%	\$9135.00	-\$3535.00	\$0.00
\$75 (covers 25% of program shortfall)	261	\$75.00	70.0%	\$13 703.00	\$1033.00	\$4568.00
\$109 (covers 50% of program shortfall)	261	\$109.00	57.0%	\$16 216.00	\$3546.00	\$7081.00
\$143 (covers 75% of program shortfall)	261	\$143.00	33.0%	\$12 317.00	-\$353.00	\$3182.00
\$177 (covers 100% of program shortfall)	261	\$177.00	29.0%	\$13 397.00	\$727.00	\$4262.00

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS PAYMENT MODEL 2

Voluntary Contributions Payment Model 2 averages the contribution percentage between consecutive voluntary contributions; specifically, for example, 75.0% of responders nominated a voluntary contribution of **at least** \$75.00, while 57.0% of responders nominated a voluntary contribution of **at least** \$109.00.

The average of 75.0% (responders willing to pay **at least** \$75.00 voluntary contribution) and 57% (responders willing to pay **at least** \$109.00 voluntary contribution) is 66.0%, which is the contribution percentage applied to the lower of the two voluntary contributions; in this case, \$75.00.

Voluntary contributions to SAKG program	No. of students	Contribution per student	Contribution percentage	Total contributions	Delta 2018 ¹⁵	Delta 2019 ¹⁶
\$50 (unchanged)	261	\$50.00	70.0%	\$9135.00	-\$3535.00	\$0.00
\$75 (covers 25% of program shortfall)	261	\$75.00	66.0%	\$12 920.00	\$250.00	\$3785.00
\$109 (covers 50% of program shortfall)	261	\$109.00	44.0%	\$12 518.00	-\$152.00	\$3383.00
\$143 (covers 75% of program shortfall)	261	\$143.00	30.0%	\$11 197.00	-\$1473.00	\$2062.00
\$177 (covers 100% of program shortfall)	261	\$177.00	28.0%	\$12 935.00	\$265.00	\$3800.00

¹² DELTA is the change in the projected contributions from 2018 to the projected contributions in 2019.

¹³ DELTA 2018 models the difference in total voluntary contributions resulting from the change in voluntary contribution per student, allowing for the reduction in student numbers in the SAKG program between 2018 and 2019, as specified in Recommendation 2 of this report.

¹⁴ DELTA 2019 models the difference in total voluntary contributions resulting from the change in voluntary contribution per student

¹⁵ DELTA 2018 models the difference in total voluntary contributions resulting from the change in voluntary contribution per student, allowing for the reduction in student numbers in the SAKG program between 2018 and 2019, as specified in Recommendation 2 of this report.

¹⁶ DELTA 2019 models the difference in total voluntary contributions resulting from the change in voluntary contribution per student

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS PAYMENT MODEL 3

Voluntary Contributions Payment Model 3 extrapolates survey responses over the entire population of year 3 to 6 students, before assuming that only 70% of the population of year 3 to 6 students choose to pay voluntary contributions; specifically, for example, 57.0% of responders nominated a voluntary contribution of **at least** \$109.00. Assuming that 70% of this sample choose to pay their voluntary contribution, 70.0% of 57.0% of survey responders is 40.0%.

Voluntary Contributions Payment Model 3 assumes that the survey response is representative of 70.0% of the population of year three to six families at Westgarth PS.

Voluntary contributions to SAKG program	No. of students	Contribution per student	Contribution percentage	Total contributions	Delta 2018 ¹⁷	Delta 2019 ¹⁸
\$50 (unchanged)	261	\$50.00	70.0%	\$9135.00	-\$3535.00	\$0.00
\$75 (covers 25% of program shortfall)	261	\$75.00	53.0%	\$10 375.00	-\$2295.00	\$1240.00
\$109 (covers 50% of program shortfall)	261	\$109.00	40.0%	\$11 484.00	-\$1186.00	\$2349.00
\$143 (covers 75% of program shortfall)	261	\$143.00	23.0%	\$8584.00	-\$4086.00	-\$551.00
\$177 (covers 100% of program shortfall)	261	\$177.00	20.0%	\$9239.00	-\$3431.00	\$104.00

¹⁷ DELTA 2018 models the difference in total voluntary contributions resulting from the change in voluntary contribution per student, allowing for the reduction in student numbers in the SAKG program between 2018 and 2019, as specified in Recommendation 2 of this report.

¹⁸ DELTA 2019 models the difference in total voluntary contributions resulting from the change in voluntary contribution per student