

## Shark Tank idea aimed at getting kids cooking picked up by Upper Hunter School

Caitlin Reid  
11 Aug 2017, 10:11 a.m.



St Joseph's Merriwa gets kids cooking

St Joseph's Primary School Merriwa was the only school in the Hunter to get behind the new program aimed at getting kids to adopt healthy lifestyle habits.

TWO young mums from Sydney had an idea to bring kids cooking classes into schools – and now their business Get Kids Cooking has seen national success.

Joanne Bowskill and Holly Boal saw a problem with the eating habits of children and decided to start a primary school cooking education program aimed at teaching our youth to prepare healthy meals and enjoy eating.

Their idea gathered national momentum after having success on Channel 10's Shark Tank Australia with Dr Glen Richards jumping on board.

Now their aim is to focus on rural schools and national expansion.

"We are hoping to reach 20 per cent of schools Australia wide with a major focus on rural areas," Mrs Boal said.

"Ultimately the program is aimed at students building their skills and discovering the joys of cooking for themselves, taking these techniques beyond the classroom and into their own homes for their families to enjoy.

"A lot of rural schools have beautiful vegetable gardens with fresh produce that aren't being used.

"We want to make it easy for them by providing ingredients, recipes and equipment in a box that can be sent Australia wide to reach schools that wouldn't normally have access to a program like this."

St Joseph's Primary School Principal Helen Whale said the school had noticed some problems with children not eating and they wanted to do something about it.

"I met Holly at a principals conference in the Hunter Valley and when I heard the idea I was on board straight away."

"We have already cooked moroccan couscous, a stir-fry, fritters and next week the kids will make fried rice and the teachers love it so much too - it is free for everyone and they do it once a week.

"Kids that aren't normally adventurous with food are building their confidence and bringing the recipes with them to cook at home."

Kids that aren't normally adventurous with food are building their confidence and bringing the recipes with them to cook at home

- Helen Whale

Ms Whale said St Joseph's will also try to incorporate home-grown produce in their cooking, using vegetables from the school's garden and the children's gardens at home.

"That way it doesn't cost anything more, it's easy and it's really about embedding healthy habits that the kids can get excited about that take them out of the classroom and interacting," she said.

The students are already three weeks into the eight week program and student Levi Hourne said he was excited to keep cooking.

"I enjoy cooking healthy meals with my family and I've already made two of the recipes from the classes at home – we make protein balls at home too," he said.

