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Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Healthy Eating is Back on the Table

The Rudd Government is looking for schools to get on board for the next round of the innovative Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden National Program.

Today I am announcing the second round of funding for the program, which helps tackle childhood obesity by giving children a hands-on experience in healthy eating.

Under the program, children in government schools from Years 3 to 6 grow, harvest, cook and share fresh food under the Australian Government initiative to improve nutrition and develop life-long healthy eating habits.

This round of funding builds on the success of the first round in August last year when more than 40 schools received funding. They are now at various stages of implementing the program.

These schools are busy building kitchens and gardens, while in some classes have already begun. Demonstration schools have been set up in each state and territory to encourage new schools to participate in the program.

The Government has committed \$12.8 million over four years for up to 190 primary schools nationally to participate.

Each participating school will receive one-off funding of up to \$60,000 to cover infrastructure costs associated with building kitchens and gardens.

The project, inspired by top Australian chef Stephanie Alexander, is part of the Government's plans for tackling obesity, particularly in children and adolescents.

The level of overweight and obesity in children in this country is not acceptable and further highlights the importance of the Government's commitment to tackle this issue head on.

Our commitment is demonstrated by the investment of \$872.1 million over six years in preventive health through the Council of Australian Governments – the largest ever investment by an Australian Government in health promotion.

Interventions will be implemented in settings such as preschools, schools, workplaces and communities to help people modify their lifestyles to reduce their risk of chronic disease.

This unprecedented investment in health builds on the more than \$50 million previously provided by the Government for obesity prevention initiatives including those specifically targeting children.

They include the Healthy Kids Check, Get Set 4 Life Guide, the Active After-School Communities Program and the Walk Safely to School Program.

For further information and application forms, go to the Department of Health and Ageing (www.health.gov.au) or the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation (www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au) websites.

For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220