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Abstract

## Embracing synergies to overcome diversity: creating nationally applicable school canteen online training

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**Sub-theme:** what is working, what needs to be strengthened and what are the biggest gaps in prevention systems?

**Key words:** advocacy, capacity building, collaboration, community engagement, innovation, economics of prevention, relationship building

### Introduction

The introduction of healthier food and drink policy/guidelines in schools has led to improvements in the food supply in this setting. Running canteens is much more than providing healthy foods and is complicated by differing Australian policy requirements and minimum qualifications for canteen staff. Embracing synergies rather than focusing on diversity enabled the Federation of Canteens in Schools (FOCiS) to advocate for a national approach to training.

### Methods

FOCiS conducted a literature review and environmental scan of online training and resources, which identified gaps for school canteens. Seeking national collaboration to smash silos, FOCiS established a national tendering process to engage an organisation that demonstrated commitment to a shared vision; relevant previous experience; and knowledge of the target audience to develop an innovative online training package using national consultation and program piloting. The contract was awarded to the WA School Canteen Association (WASCA).

### Results

Shifting the focus away from different policy requirements, WASCA consulted a broad range of national stakeholders to develop training that includes the consistent key components of effective canteen management. For example, advocating for a whole school approach to healthy eating, 'food foundations' modelled on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, best practice financial management and preparing safe food.

### Conclusion

A model based on collaboration and meaningful partnerships was used to overcome diversity and improve nutrition in the school setting. FOCiS' training will equip school canteen operators with the skills and knowledge to provide safe, nutritious foods in a financially viable food service.