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## Youthblock dishes up top tucker tips

Sydney Local Health District's youth health and resource service, Youthblock, has launched a roaming community kitchen, giving young people a chance to get involved in cooking, learn about nutrition and enjoy a free meal.

Thanks to a \$1000 grant from Headspace, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, Youthblock purchased all cooking equipment and ingredients needed to hold five community kitchens, aimed at young people from Aboriginal and multicultural backgrounds.

The monthly community kitchen sessions provide participants with health education information on nutrition, techniques for correct food handling and how to cook cheap healthy meals. The young people prepare and cook the meal with assistance from Youthblock and Headspace staff, with everyone sharing the resulting feast, which has so far included kangaroo stir-fry, burritos and beef stew.

While community kitchens are not a new idea, Youthblock has taken the concept a step further by making the kitchen mobile.

"The idea is to take the roaming kitchen to places where young people drop in, rather than hold them all in one location," Youthblock youth health manager Tracey Brown said.

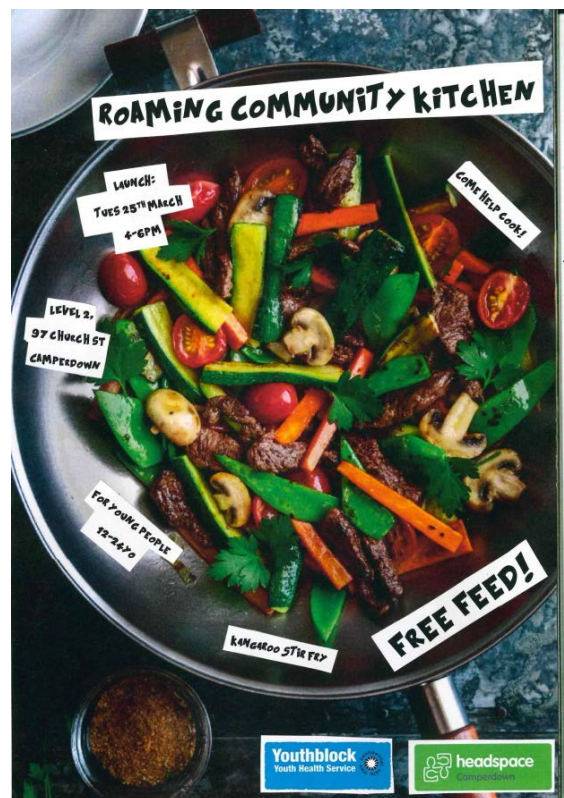
"Our first kitchen was held at Youthblock in Camperdown, where we had a dozen people turn up. The latest one was at Lakemba library, which has emerged as a central meeting place for young people in the area. We were very pleased at its success, with 40-50 young people attending."

There are two more roaming community kitchens planned, one at Redfern Community Centre during NAIDOC week in July, and one at Marrickville PCYC during the school holidays, coinciding with their school holiday program.

While only the initial five roaming community kitchens have been planned at this stage, more are expected in the future, as the only ongoing cost is the ingredients.



Cooking up a storm at the Roaming Community Kitchen.



“The roaming kitchen is a great way for youth health staff to build rapport and trust with young people” Ms Brown said.

“Because they have met us in a fun and informal setting, they are much more likely to approach us if they need help. The project is a sustainable way to improve not just healthy eating in young people, but potentially their overall wellbeing.”

Youthblock provides free confidential support, counselling and health services for disadvantaged young people living or spending time in the inner west.

For more information on the service see [www.slhd.nsw.gov.au/CommunityHealth](http://www.slhd.nsw.gov.au/CommunityHealth) or Headspace at [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

