



HELPING YOU  
PREVENT DIABETES  
HEART DISEASE & STROKE



# THE SIX WEEK CHALLENGE

## Building healthy habits for life

**The Six Week Challenge is a health and wellbeing challenge run by the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) Healthy Lifestyle and Tackling Tobacco Team.**

The Challenge supports and motivates its participants to live healthier lives and to:

- eat more fruit and vegetables;
- drink more water;
- avoid foods high in fats, sugar and salt; and
- get moving every day!

The Challenge also encourages smokers to either cut down, or better yet quit.

People of all ages and fitness level are welcome and families are encouraged to bring their kids to ensure that as many people in the community benefit as possible.

The Challenge is free and is complemented by a full timetable of gym sessions.

The gym is located at 238-250 Plenty Rd, Preston, 3072. Find out how to join/register/get involved here: <http://www.vahs.org.au/healthy-lifestyles/>



The Life! program is supported by the Victorian Government



# Working together - local partnerships and support

In early 2016, the VAHS Healthy Lifestyle and Tackling Tobacco Team worked in collaboration with the Diabetes Victoria *Life!* team to integrate *Life!*'s Road to Good Health, a type 2 diabetes prevention program for Aboriginal people and their families, into VAHS's Six Week Challenge.

By working together, VAHS incorporated *Life!*'s Road to Good Health session topics such as 'What is diabetes?', 'Finding fat in food' and 'Getting active' and participant health questionnaires into the Six Week Challenge. Road to Good Health provided VAHS with culturally appropriate supporting resources to assist in topic delivery including step by step facilitator manuals, participant workbook material including recipes and healthy eating and exercise books and posters.

The result was a successful collaboration between VAHS's Six Week Challenge and *Life!*'s Road to Good Health program. From March 2016, 33 Six Week Challenge participants commenced the program. Participant engagement was strong and feedback showed that a flexible, fun, family-friendly approach and a passionate facilitator were key factors to its success.

VAHS also connected with Darebin Community Health to be part of the program. By collaborating with other health teams such as dietitians, diabetes educators and personal trainers, the Challenge was able to provide the most effective program possible.

Diabetes Victoria *Life!* team are available to meet with your organisation to discuss our flexible implementation options of the Road to Good Health program.



## Contact details

To learn more about the Six Week Challenge or Road to Good Health, please see the below contact details.

### VAHS Six Week Challenge

Sarah Sheridan  
Health Promotion Project Co-Ordinator  
E: [sarah.sheridan@vahs.org.au](mailto:sarah.sheridan@vahs.org.au)  
P: (03) 9403 3388

### The *Life!* Road to Good Health program

Louise Green  
Health Promotion Officer Aboriginal and Cultural Diversity  
E: [lgreen@diabetesvic.org.au](mailto:lgreen@diabetesvic.org.au)  
P: (03) 8648 1825



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# Meet Sarah

## The Six Week Challenge Facilitator

**Sarah's passion for The Six Week Challenge is infectious! Her warm, bubbly personality helps to create a welcoming atmosphere and keeps participants coming back week after week. In addition, Sarah's own journey towards good health – having recently lost 55 kilograms – gives her great insight into behaviour change and the participant experience.**

"Our programs are open to all ages, experiences and fitness levels – everyone is always more than welcome. It is inspiring to see families with young kids having the opportunity work out together in a safe and supportive environment. The large numbers of participants that undertake our program is a true testament to the commitment of the entire team to seeing genuine and sustainable change in the Community.

Having the opportunity to encourage others to make positive lifestyle changes and being able to support others using my own understanding and experience is not something all facilitators can offer. We love our Challenge and the changes that we see in the participants and the wider community as a result of the program! As we always say: the number on the scale does not determine who you are, it's all about being healthy and happy for life!"





## Meet Jackie

### A Six Week Challenge participant

"It's inspirational and you've always got someone backing you up telling you can do it. Overall it's been a great experience and I'd like it to go on forever."

Jackie is part of the Gunditjmara family from the Portland area. She works at the University of Melbourne and likes gardening, socialising and reading. Jackie was diagnosed as having coeliac disease seven years ago.

"I heard about the program through reading a Facebook post from my cousin. As a lot of my family work for VAHS, I thought it might be a good chance to bond with family members. I'd been going to the gym by myself but it's good to do something with other people.

The program's good because it reminds you of things that you already know. It's reminded me that I have to read every food label and that exercise is fun, not a chore. I've also realised that losing weight is not necessarily the whole story. My goal is to become fit and healthy, so if I don't lose weight in one particular week, so be it; I'm still doing something good for myself.

It's been great getting to know people who are family but who I didn't really know before, as well as other people who've come along and of course Sarah as well!

I definitely feel better. I've lost 10kg in my journey, 4.7kg since I started here. I've lost a centimetre around my stomach and I need to buy some new clothes.

I would recommend the Six Week Challenge because I think it's an awesome way to get people started into activity. It's inspirational and you've always got someone backing you up telling you can do it. Overall it's been a great experience and I'd like it to go on forever."



## Meet Ngarra

### A Six Week Challenge participant

"I would definitely recommend The Six Week Challenge. I try to get everybody to sign up! I'm feeling a lot fitter, have lost weight and it's been a kick-start to a healthier lifestyle for my family."

Ngarra is a Wamba Wamba Yorta mother of four and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Program, National Programs Lead at Oxfam Australia. With a new baby, a young family and a busy life, Ngarra was finding it hard to fit exercise in.

"Before starting the Six Week Challenge, I'd had my youngest child in October [6 months prior to the program]. I hadn't had much time to exercise apart from walking, though I used to play a lot of sports when I was younger.

When I was pregnant with my daughter I also had gestational diabetes. I controlled that through healthy eating and I wanted to keep that going and get back to being more active.

It's great that the Challenge is a family-friendly environment so people can bring their kids. I've really enjoyed training in a group – it's easier than doing it by yourself. There's no pressure – just encouragement – and you can do it at your own pace. I've learnt exercises that I can continue to do at home with my family, and the healthy eating plan has been really useful. The Challenge book has been very helpful, for example having mashed cauliflower instead of mashed potato. Learning more about portion size control was really helpful too. We've become more active as a family and have started eating more healthy."

