



School-based kidney health promotion in primary education: evaluation of the Healthy Kidneys Education Project (HKEP)

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Type 2 diabetes (T2DM) and hypertension are major determinants of chronic kidney disease (CKD) and often preventable through lifestyle behaviours. Health literacy efforts commonly target people after chronic disease has developed, when opportunities to influence upstream determinants are reduced. HKEP is a program that teaches kidney health education effectively at scale into primary school curricula with a practical means to act earlier and reduce the incidence of preventable kidney disease.

Background

The Healthy Kidneys Education Project is a consumer-led program developed by Filter Your Future® in partnership with other education organisations. The program uses a developmentally-staged program for all primary school students (Foundation-Year 6), is curriculum-linked and delivers education on kidney function, hydration, nutrition, physical activity, T2DM and CKD prevention.

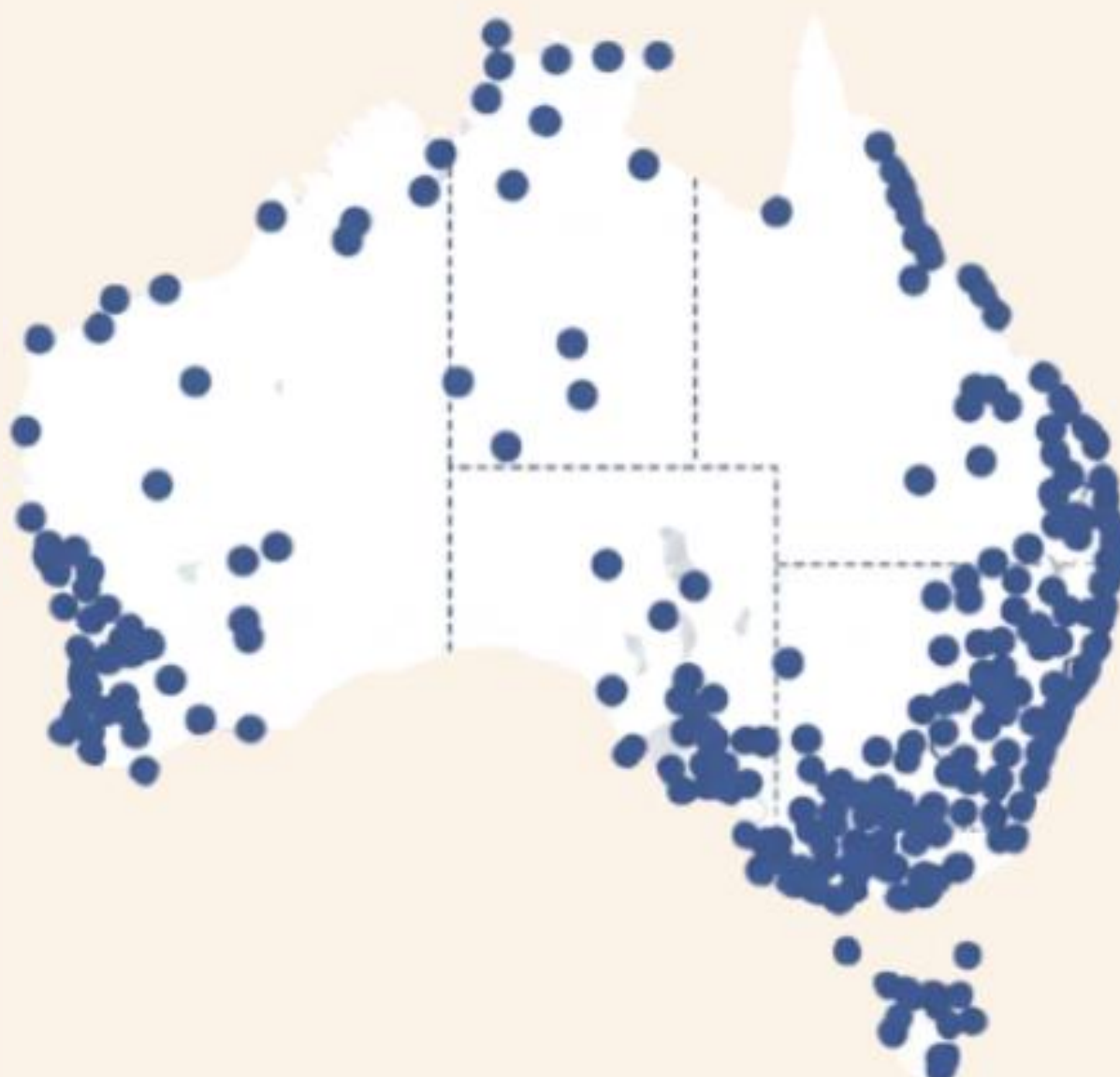
Methods

Program evaluation data across all mode of delivery included administrative reach metrics, online lesson download data, immediate post-participation feedback, and three-month follow-up survey data. Data were summarised descriptively using counts and percentages. Follow-up responses assessed recall of key messages and self-reported behaviour change.

Figure 1. Multimodal delivery of the Healthy Kidneys Education Project



Results

Face-to-face school incursions	Online classroom resources	Filter Fun Park – The Musical																																																						
HKEP was delivered to 14 schools in Victoria and ceased in 2020 due to COVID-19. Schools participated in HKEP from metropolitan, rural, and remote areas, with ICSEA³ scores ranging from 964 to 1,168. Table 1. School incursion program rollout <table><tr><th>Year</th><th>2017</th><th>2018</th><th>2019</th><th>2020</th><th>Total</th></tr><tr><td colspan="6">Metropolitan</td></tr><tr><td> Schools</td><td>2</td><td>6</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td> Students</td><td>227</td><td>842</td><td>204</td><td>209</td><td>1482</td></tr><tr><td> Teachers</td><td>12</td><td>45</td><td>15</td><td>12</td><td>84</td></tr><tr><td colspan="6">Rural and remote</td></tr><tr><td> Schools</td><td>1</td><td>^</td><td>2</td><td>^</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td> Students</td><td>33</td><td>^</td><td>331</td><td>^</td><td>364</td></tr><tr><td> Teachers</td><td>1</td><td>^</td><td>29</td><td>^</td><td>30</td></tr></table> [^] No data collected. Further details on evaluation and feedback can be accessed here: filteryourfuture.com.au	Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total	Metropolitan						Schools	2	6	2	1	11	Students	227	842	204	209	1482	Teachers	12	45	15	12	84	Rural and remote						Schools	1	^	2	^	3	Students	33	^	331	^	364	Teachers	1	^	29	^	30	In May 2020, face-to-face sessions were adapted into 12 curriculum-linked lessons, which teachers and educators could download for their classroom use. <u>Total lesson downloads (2020-2025)</u> • 2,116 for Years 1–2 • 1,938 for Years 3–4 • 1,557 for Years 5–6  Figure 1. Unique downloads across Australia	The musical enhances HKEP’s health education delivery through using live, interactive theatre to empower primary school students as health educators for their peers, teachers, and families.  Figure 2. Filter Fun Park™ Performances have taken place in schools and community venues across Melbourne, Perth, and Newcastle. Each production involved 6–10 primary school students as performers, and reached audiences of 75–145 people, including students, families, and teachers. Additional performances and ongoing evaluation are in progress.
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Conclusion

HKEP offers a practical, multimodal approach to extending kidney health literacy upstream through primary school education. Early evaluation findings suggest strong reach, engagement and reported intentions to adopt healthier behaviours. Continued delivery alongside more robust evaluation may clarify its contribution to longer-term chronic disease prevention.