

Herald Sun

Victoria

Free fruit program for schools gets the chop

- by: *Evonne Barry*
- From: **Herald Sun**
- July 20, 2012 12:00AM

32 comments

[Recommend](#)[Send](#)

104 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends.

[Tweet](#)

0

PRINCIPALS and dietitians have slammed the end of a free fruit program that helped thousands of school kids live healthier.

Free Fruit Friday was an effective and cheap way of encouraging children to eat healthily, education leaders said yesterday.

Today will be the first "fruitless" Friday in five years.

The program, which cost as little as \$40 a week per school, has lost its government funding.

About 300 schools were involved.

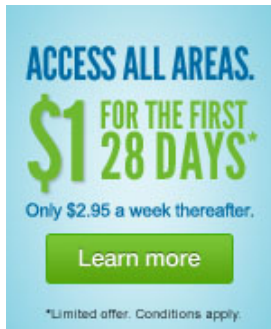
"It was a terrific program because we were actually walking the talk," Principals Association president Gabrielle Leigh said.

"It promoted healthy eating because we were giving students healthy foods to eat. We're very disappointed it's been axed."

Financing for the program was withdrawn in last year's state Budget.



Kyan, Taylor and Bailey will miss their fruit fix. Picture: Stuart Walmsley
Source: Herald Sun



*Limited offer. Conditions apply.

([http://digitalpass.heraldsun.com.au?](http://digitalpass.heraldsun.com.au?int_medium=site_placement&int_source=HS&int_campaign=hs_pc_acq_spring-tactical&int_content=mp_story_free_seealso&int_creative_id=hs_pc_acq_tactical afl_dp+we_149x181_v1&sourceCode=HSWEB_MPL121_b)

[int_medium=site_placement&int_source=HS&int_campaign=hs_pc_acq_spring-tactical&int_content=mp_story_free_seealso&int_creative_id=hs_pc_acq_tactical afl_dp+we_149x181_v1&sourceCode=HSWEB_MPL121_b](#))

Lisa Vandembosch, principal of Crib Point Primary on the Mornington Peninsula, discovered this week the program had stopped.

She credited Free Fruit Friday with a "general improvement in the health and wellbeing of our kids over the years".

"It was so important because our children have tasted fruits and vegetables that they may never have been exposed to," she said.

"It's broadened their palates. And we have also been able to convince parents that their children actually do like fruit and vegetables."

Dietitian Melanie McGrice said: "You can teach children things from a text book, but it's practical, habit-forming things that make the difference.

"A program like this provides a great environment for kids to be able to taste these foods in a positive environment, where they are more likely to enjoy them."

An Education Department spokeswoman said the Free Fruit Friday program, aimed at students from prep to grade 2, had been superseded with a "whole-school approach".

"The Victorian Government has created a brand new, \$40 million health promotion program for all primary schools, across all year levels," she said.

The spokeswoman said all schools were informed after last year's budget, and again this year, that the Free Fruit Friday would cease this July.

Share:



104 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends.

Follow:

Find heraldsun.com.au on Facebook

@TheHeraldSun on Twitter

Herald Sun

Search for: