Food security and eating well for all in Victoria
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Background - Eat Well Australia (1) has recognised many of the initiatives required to address food insecurity in urban as well as rural and remote locations.

Objective - To evaluate and identify sustainable programs to improve urban food security in two local government areas.

Design - The evaluation was conducted across Demonstration Projects over 18 months in the inner urban Cities of Yarra and Maribyrnong (2). Logical Framework Analysis and a number of checklists and tools were applied, including cluster analysis. Evaluation criteria included increasing community capacity, specified reach and quality for interventions, policy and organisational change specified, sustainability and transferability.

Results - Five intervention strategy themes were identified across both Projects: local government food security policies; garden programs; local food access programs; local meals access programs, and; emergency food relief programs. Evaluation identified the qualities of each strategy in both Projects, and provided a conceptual model for improving food security.

Conclusions - Primary health care and community services and agencies offer the best opportunities for strategies with vulnerable groups at risk of individual food security. Local Government area Public Health Plans offer major settings for improving community food security and whole of population strategies. State Government policy framework is required to support these settings state-wide and food security for all.

The influence of red meat intake upon the response to a resistance exercise-training program in older Australians
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Background - In older adults muscle performance declines with age, and in the elderly this can have a major impact on daily living by impairing the ability to undertake routine activities, increasing risk of falls and hindering recovery from injury. A recent study has suggested that the protein intake of older adults may be insufficient to maintain optimum muscle capacity (1).

Objective – To examine the effects of a 12-week diet and exercise program upon skeletal muscle performance and body composition in older Australians.

Design – Subjects (n=28, mean age=67yr, range 63-76yr) undertook a lower limb resistance-training program while consuming a diet with 20% energy as protein delivered through two levels of red meat intake (either moderate = 800g/week, or low = 400g/week in combination with other sources of dietary protein). Muscle performance was assessed at weeks 0, 6 & 12. At week 0 and week 12, body composition was assessed using anthropometry, BIA and thigh X-sectional CT, and dietary intake assessed by diet history.

Outcomes - Exercise training significantly increased leg muscle strength by more than 50% (P<0.01) and muscle endurance ~30% (P<0.01), and reduced thigh skin folds ~15% (P<0.01). Subjects on the moderate red meat diet had greater improvements in muscle strength at week 6 than those on the low red meat diet (P<0.01), but this difference was abolished at the study endpoint. The red meat was incorporated into both diets with no change in overall energy intake.

Conclusions - In older Australians, a resistance-training program markedly increased muscle strength. Consuming a diet with a moderate red meat content compared to a low red meat content in part enhanced the benefits upon muscle performance.