



### Indigo INFANT partnerships enabling better early child health outcomes through community support

#### INFANT snapshot: Indigo

- LGA location: Rural
- Births per year: 150-160 per year
- INFANT model: Lead organisation – Community Health; Session facilitators – Dietitians (Community Health)
- INFANT funding model: uses Integrated Health Promotion funding and primary health funding to facilitate the four INFANT sessions

***In partnership with a range of community health organisations and local government, Indigo INFANT is delivering evidence-based early child health support with impact.***

Led by Beechworth Health Service, **I**nfant **F**eeding, **A**ctive play and **Nu**Trition (INFANT) is being implemented through strong partnerships in Indigo. Bordering the Murray River and the Alps, Indigo INFANT is being supported by Beechworth Health Service, Indigo Shire Council and Indigo North Health to enhance early child health and wellbeing.

Working together, local health organisations are committed to support families to promote healthy eating and active play in their baby’s first 1000 days. In 2021, Indigo INFANT was made possible through the support of integrated health promotion and primary health funding coupled by embedding INFANT into local Indigo Shire Council plans and Integrated Health Promotion plans. In addition, collectively all agencies are participating in Deakin University RESPOND project to reduce childhood obesity in the region.

#### Driving better community lifestyles

Partners are working together to address some of the community’s biggest health challenges. As partners, they bring together dietetics, nursing and health promotion expertise.

Research shows promoting healthy lifestyle habits early in life is important for optimal growth and development, as well as the prevention of chronic diseases later in life. “All partners are committed to delivering the INFANT program as it is an evidence-based program to support health and wellbeing initiatives to the community,” said the Indigo INFANT team.

In late 2020, the partnership kicked off officially in a series of implementation meetings between Beechworth Health Service and the Indigo Shire Council. Throughout the process, Indigo North Health was updated while in the midst of recruiting a Health Promotion role.

Each organisation is working collaboratively to implement INFANT. Their roles include:

- Beechworth Health Service team coordinate partner meetings and hold seed funding.
- Indigo Shire Council engage in recruitment of new parents, promotion and organisations of sessions, venue bookings, session times, communication with families and recruitment of parents to INFANT evaluation.



## Case Study – Indigo

- All partners will assist in the delivery of the INFANT program sessions.
- Indigo INFANT Team also undertakes the ongoing review of sessions and sustainability of INFANT.
- All partners are working together to ensure sustainability of the program long term

From recruiting families to delivering sessions, INFANT's research is being translated directly to improve support in clinical community settings. As Indigo's INFANT progresses, program delivery and sessions are intended to be shared amongst the partners including dietitians, MCHNs, health promotion officers and early years officer. Indigo Shire have included INFANT in their Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) 2021 -25, moving towards a sustainable delivery model with considerable impact.

### Deakin's supporting role in the initiation of Indigo INFANT

Deakin's Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN) provided seed funding to help Indigo INFANT get started in their community. It is supporting Indigo to provide a focus on promoting healthy eating and active play from the start of life – aiming to improve the health of Indigo's families and their babies.

“We are making use of this seed funding to develop a project plan and local evaluation plan. We will develop additional resources to deliver INFANT in line with evaluation results, including purchasing resource materials and associated printing costs,” said the Indigo INFANT team.

#### Key takeaways

- Indigo INFANT is supported by rural health services to enhance support to promote early child health.
- In 2021, Indigo INFANT was made possible through the support of Integrated Health Promotion and primary health dietitian funding coupled with the embedding of INFANT into several local Indigo council plans.
- Deakin's IPAN seed funding is supporting Indigo, to provide a focus on promoting healthy eating and active play from the start of life – aiming to improve the health of Indigo's families and their babies.

#### Get in touch with Indigo

Website: <https://www.indigoshire.vic.gov.au/Residents/Children-and-families/Maternal-and-Child-Health>

Gabriella Tange  
Health Promotion  
Beechworth Health Service  
[gabriella.tange@beechworthhealth.org.au](mailto:gabriella.tange@beechworthhealth.org.au)

Anna Fraser  
Early Years Team Leader  
Indigo Shire Council  
[anna.fraser@indigoshire.vic.gov.au](mailto:anna.fraser@indigoshire.vic.gov.au)

