CHINESE WOMEN WORKING IN MARKET GARDENS ACROSS THE SYDNEY BASIN

FINAL REPORT
June 2006

Program Manager: Vivienne Strong
Senior Project Officer: Nerilyn Lee
CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................5

FINAL PROJECT REPORT STRUCTURE AND PERSPECTIVE ........................................... 8

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS .......................................................................................... 9

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .................................................................................................... 11

BACKGROUND .................................................................................................................. 16

INTRODUCTION
People of Chinese background in Australia .................................................................... 16
Agriculture in New South Wales ........................................................................................ 17
Agriculture in the Sydney Basin ........................................................................................ 17

MARKET GARDENING IN THE SYDNEY BASIN
The population .................................................................................................................. 21
Working with the population ............................................................................................ 22

PROJECT APPROACH
Methodology ...................................................................................................................... 25
Management model ........................................................................................................... 25
Getting to know the communities .................................................................................... 26
Getting to know the women ............................................................................................. 26
The vital opportunity ........................................................................................................ 29
Training courses for the "Safe Use of Pesticides" ............................................................ 29
Introduction of a Health Module ...................................................................................... 30
Childcare ............................................................................................................................ 33
Valuing culture .................................................................................................................. 33
Service providers and the CALDB grower community ................................................... 33
The invisible communities – drought, water restrictions ................................................ 35

EVALUATION OF THE CHINESE MARKET GARDEN PROJECT
Evidence ............................................................................................................................. 36

PROJECT OUTCOMES FOR THE COMMUNITY ............................................................ 36

CHANGES IN THE WOMEN’S LIVES .............................................................................. 37

By Observation ................................................................................................................ 37
Confidence to leave the farm ............................................................................................ 37
Confidence to use commercial facilities .......................................................................... 38
Confidence to apply for work .......................................................................................... 38
Confidence to run a playgroup ......................................................................................... 38
Confidence to manage a children’s community language school .................................. 39
Confidence to allow children to play with others ............................................................ 39
Confidence to meet and support each other .................................................................... 39
Confidence to arrange outings .............................................................................................................40
Confidence to obtain increased knowledge on women’s health ........................................................40
matters and a raised awareness of safe work practices

Interviews with the Women...................................................................................................................41
Woman 1.................................................................................................................................................41
Woman 2................................................................................................................................................44
Woman 3................................................................................................................................................46
Woman 4................................................................................................................................................49
Woman 5 .................................................................................................................................................51

CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT AGENCIES...........................................56
NSW Department of Primary Industry .................................................................................................56
NSW Department of Environment and Conservation .........................................................................56
New South Wales Department of Education and Training .................................................................56
(NSW DET) and NSW TAFE Outreach
Local Government .................................................................................................................................57
Childcare.................................................................................................................................................57
Centrelink ...............................................................................................................................................58
NSW Department of Community Services .........................................................................................58

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS .............................................................................................................58

WHAT WORKED WELL
Model of Project Implementation................................................................................................ .........58
Partnerships ...........................................................................................................................................58

WHAT DID NOT WORK WELL .............................................................................................................59

RECOMMENDATIONS.........................................................................................................................60

REFERENCES .........................................................................................................................................61

APPENDICES
Appendix 1 List of Information and Training sessions developed in partnership during the project. .............................................................................................................................................64
Appendix 2 Leppington Chinese Panda Playgroup – Development Report ........................................67
Appendix 4 The Health Component for “Safe Use of Pesticides”, Training Program ......................79
Appendices 6 & 7 A representation of correspondence (advocacy) to key government and non-government bodies on issues impacting on the growers in the Sydney Basin, who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds ................101
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Mr. Abd Malak Director Workforce Development and Planning
Director Diversity Health Institute

Ms. Clarissa Mulas Deputy Director Diversity Health Institute
Director Multicultural Health Network

‘Women’s Health at Work’ Steering Committee Members 2001 – 2004

Ms. Jenny Coutts (Chairperson)
Ms. Debbie Carstens
Ms. Lesley Garton
Ms. Angela Mason
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Frances Parker
Ms. Alison Peters
Mr. Abd Malak
Ms. Clarissa Mulas
Ms. Nerilyn Lee
Ms. Vivienne Strong


HILLS WORKING GROUP

Bridget Tam        Australian Chinese Community Association
Dennis Muldoon     Hills Community Aid
Dipak Aditya       NSW Department of Primary Industries
Dr. Frances Parker University Western Sydney
Emma McPherson     Hills Community Aid
Joyce Ma           Hills Community Health Centre         SWAHS
Kara-Lynn Flood    University Western Sydney
Kevin Lai University Western Sydney
Mr. David Ha Grower
Mr. Shun Xin Huang Grower
Mr. Xue Ming Zhong Grower
Mrs. Chen Grower
Mrs. Sandra Chan Grower
Mrs. Sau Ying Ha Grower
Nerilyn Lee Women’s Health at Work Program SWAHS
Sabrina Man Australian Chinese Community Association
Vivienne Strong Women’s Health at Work Program SWAHS

CAMDEN WORKING GROUP

Anna Robinson Playgroup NSW Inc
Bronwyn Hennessy Macarthur Diversity Services Inc
Debbie Graham Narellen Neighbourhood Centre
Dr. Frances Parker University Western Sydney
Jenny Stevens Jumbunna Project Children’s Support Worker
Julie Martin Population Health SWAHS
Karen Lawson Camden Council
Lynn McDonald Camden Council
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Vicki Jelic Macarthur Diversity Services Inc
Vivienne Strong Women’s Health at Work SWAHS
Wendy Thomson Narellen Community Health SWAHS

HAWKESBURY/ NEPEAN WORKING GROUP

Aldo Vumbuca Commercial Flower Growers Assoc
Allison Anderson NSW Vegetable Industry
Bill McMahon Grower and NSW Free Growers Horticultural Council
Carol Tingate Area Multicultural Health Western Cluster SWAHS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Mason</td>
<td>Hawkesbury Harvest</td>
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<td>Denise Newton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Frances Parker</td>
<td>University Western Sydney</td>
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<td>Fiona Luckhurst- Khan</td>
<td>Nepean Migrant Access</td>
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<td>Fred Haskins</td>
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<td>Gail de Lucia</td>
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<td>Jennifer Harold</td>
<td>Hawkesbury Food Program</td>
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<td>Joseph Finianos</td>
<td>Ethnic Communities Council</td>
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<td>Julian Lee</td>
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<td>Julie Moore</td>
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<td>Kara-Lynn Flood</td>
<td>University Western Sydney</td>
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<td>Kate Faithorn</td>
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<td>Linda Ingles</td>
<td>NSW Technical and Further Education</td>
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<td>Liz Chamberlain</td>
<td>NSW Farmers Association</td>
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<td>Lyn Saville</td>
<td>Hawkesbury Food Program</td>
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<td>Mangal Prabhu</td>
<td>Multicultural Services Volunteer</td>
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<td>Nerilyn Lee</td>
<td>Women’s Health at Work SWAHS</td>
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<td>Peter Malcolm</td>
<td>NSW Department of Primary Industries</td>
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<td>Rhonda Balzen</td>
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<td>Rita Perkins</td>
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<td>Ron Bastion</td>
<td>Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Foundation</td>
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<td>Sheryl Jarecki</td>
<td>University Western Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vichet Kim</td>
<td>University Western Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivienne Strong</td>
<td>Women’s Health at Work SWAHS</td>
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The project titled "Chinese Women Working in Market Gardens across the Sydney Basin" was developed and implemented between 2001 and 2005.

This report documents the impact of the project on the lives of the women, the effects that their employment had on their health and well-being and the outcomes from strategies implemented in partnership with both government and non-government organisations.

During this time a number of partnering organisations were funded to run specific projects from other funding sources. The University of Western Sydney had two funded projects running concurrently. Funding bodies were the New South Wales Department for Women (NSW DOW) and the New South Wales Environmental Trust (NSW ET). Organisations and agencies that received separate funding are most likely to develop reports on the input and outcomes in relation to their organisational goals and objectives. This report is written to reflect the goals of Women’s Health at Work (WHAW) and to document the objectives and outcomes of the Project.

In addition to the main body of the report, the authors have included other supporting documents in the form of Appendices that include:

Appendix 2 Leppington Chinese Panda Playgroup – Development Report – Nerilyn Lee

Appendix 3 South West Sydney Children’s Chinese School Association – Development Report – Nerilyn Lee

Appendix 4 The Health Component for "Safe Use of Pesticides", Training Program – Nerilyn Lee


Appendices 6 & 7 A representation of correspondence (advocacy) to key government and non-government bodies on issues impacting on the growers in the Sydney Basin, who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds


For further background reading on the issues for farmers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and those employed in the horticultural industry across the Sydney Basin, refer to publications listed in the Reference section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABN</td>
<td>Australian Business Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCA</td>
<td>Australian Chinese Community Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>AHS</td>
<td>Area Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMHU</td>
<td>Area Multicultural Health Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALDB</td>
<td>Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATM</td>
<td>Automatic Teller Machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCC</td>
<td>Australian Safety and Compensation Council (Previously National Occupational Health and Safety Commission)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>Bi-Lingual Community Educator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARC</td>
<td>Camden Area Community Resource Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD</td>
<td>Culturally and Linguistically Diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Centre for Disease Control and Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDO</td>
<td>Community Development Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOW</td>
<td>Department of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETP</td>
<td>Environmental Trust Project &quot;Developing An IPM Strategy For NESB Farmers in The Sydney Basin&quot;</td>
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<td>HCA</td>
<td>Hills Community Aid</td>
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<td>Hills Community Health</td>
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<td>HCIS</td>
<td>Health Care Interpreter Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPM</td>
<td>Integrated Pest Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
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<td>LOTE</td>
<td>Language Other Than English</td>
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<td>MCAAS</td>
<td>Macarthur Area Assistance Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCH</td>
<td>Multicultural Health</td>
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<td>MGCDS</td>
<td>&quot;Market Gardening in a Culturally Diverse Society&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW DEC</td>
<td>New South Wales Department of Environment and Conservation (Previously Environmental Protection Authority EPA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW DET</td>
<td>New South Wales Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW DoCS</td>
<td>New South Wales Department of Community Services</td>
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Hills District Located in the local government area of Baulkham Hills Shire and includes both urban and semi-rural lands in the north-west area of Sydney

Growers A general term used in this report referring to men and women who farm on market gardens

‘The women’ In most instances refers to Cantonese speaking women, unless otherwise stated.

"Community Development refers to the process of facilitating the community's awareness of the factors and forces which affect their health and quality of life, and ultimately helping to empower them with the skills needed for taking control over and improving those conditions in their community which affect their health and way of life. It often involves helping them to identify issues of concern and facilitating their efforts to bring about change in these areas" (Hawe. P, Degling. D ,Hall. J. 1993:203).
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In mid 2001 the Women’s Health at Work Program (WHAW, SWAHS) allocated resources to commence two projects that met the criteria for program funding (Strong. V, 2001). The major project nominated for development and implementation was “Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALDB) working in market gardens across the Sydney Basin”.

From initial discussions with government and non-government organisations on the project concept, it became apparent that no one organisation could resource such a broad project. If the project was to be effective for the community, successful collaboration was critical. Broad based collaboration across both government and non-government bodies was also essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project achievements.

The project was allocated WHAW funding for four consecutive years, enabling project staff to build and maintain strong, healthy relationships with the community and other service providers. The project funding provided one part-time project officer (24 hours per week), one sessional Chinese community worker and an accredited interpreter as required. The WHAW Program Manager supported the work of the project team throughout the project. Additionally, a goods and service budget was allocated to cover the added expenses of developing information sessions including rental for the use of community halls or similar accommodation and appropriate refreshments for people undertaking hard physical labour. A car was purchased to cover the 15,000 kilometres traveled each year visiting the farms and undertaking other work for the project.

The project was managed through three collaborative working groups comprising government and non-government agencies located in the geographical areas where the farms were located. At one stage up to sixteen organisations collaborated for improved outcomes for the growers.

Community focus groups, information days and training sessions were held during which time the project gained an assessment of the community’s information needs on health, workplace issues and topics which impacted on their families and businesses.

PROJECT AIMS:

- To identify immediate and long term needs of the women
- To develop and implement sustainable strategies to address these needs which were appropriate for the women and their community, with a particular focus on ‘health’
- To work with key government and non-government organisations, in developing an awareness of the needs of workers in market gardens in the Sydney Basin, and the particular issues in relation to growers of culturally and linguistically diverse background (CALDB).

WHAW commenced working with women from Chinese backgrounds who spoke Cantonese building on previous work undertaken with this group by the University of Western Sydney (UWS) (Parker F 2000).
On commencement of the project, it became apparent that there were many issues in common across the Chinese market garden community.

For example:

- most were operated as a family business
- the place of business was also the home
- all members of the family were expected to contribute to the work of the business
- market gardeners in general, were marginalised by the broader community and its services
- they were isolated by geography and the lack of public and private transport
- there were few opportunities for the women in particular, to leave the farm or to meet and gather together for social interaction. Women identified ‘stress’ as a key issue in their lives
- ‘time’ was a precious commodity for the women, with many working between 16-20 hours a day. The long working day and the work environment predisposed the women to occupational health injuries
- the lack of English language skills exacerbated their isolation and impacted on the decisions they made that affected their lives
- the lack of relevant OH&S information on product labels relating to pesticides used in the industry, in either plain English (or other acceptable form), resulted in information being transmitted by ‘word of mouth’ from other growers, or chemical suppliers
- the lack of a national mandatory reporting process, which includes acute and chronic exposure of humans to agricultural chemicals, fails to capture important data on incidence of human exposure
- medical practitioners were not aware of the occupation of growers attending their practices, consequently those members of the community who were applying pesticides were not tested for chemical residues and their adverse side effects.

Following consultation with the Chinese community worker WHAW commenced working with the community to address some of its immediate needs. Project staff visited many of the farms making direct contact with the growers and developing effective relationships with them and their families. Through establishing successful consultative strategies with the community WHAW was then able to communicate with the women and develop effective relationships that facilitated much of the project work on issues of health and OH&S.

By implementing this model of consultation and action, WHAW gained significant cooperation from the growers right across the Sydney Basin.
SIGNIFICANT CHANGES OCCURRED ACROSS A NUMBER OF LEVELS:

Changes identified by the women empowered them to take control over areas of their lives.

For example:

- their lives were ‘opened up’ by the ability to learn and speak English
- they acquired an increase in knowledge of women’s health and occupational health matters and ‘stress levels’ identified, were much reduced
- they could demonstrate an understanding of Australia’s systems, through their improved English skills, sufficient to use tools such as interpreter services when accessing both Government and non-government agencies
- they acquired the confidence and ability to co-ordinate and learn with their children in the Little Panda Playgroup
- they developed confidence and skills to organise and manage a Chinese Community Language School
- they were able to leave their farms and visit parts of Sydney and NSW they had never previously seen.

Changes occurred at the community level including:

- men acknowledged the need for the women to undertake training in the ‘safe use of pesticides’
- project collaboration facilitated families being able to access Federal and State Government assistance during times of drought, and damage to property and farm infrastructure from fire and hail storms
- community members developed confidence in accessing government agencies for their home and business needs
- an increase in community networking and sharing. Long-term friendships and support networks were established.

Government agency changes included:

- the uptake of training and employment of bi-lingual educators or community liaison staff
- an increased awareness among agencies of this community and it’s needs
- changes in communication techniques between local primary school and parents increased parental participation in the education of children
- effective and efficient responses providing urgent assistance for the community following natural disasters
- improved access to the community, and improved communication and co-operation with the community.
Change in the lives of women, as heard through their stories, is exciting. Change in the community as a whole, is manifest as members meet together, and change within government and non-government agencies is evident throughout this evaluation.

Additionally, the outcomes from this project have demonstrated the importance of effective partnerships between communities, and government and non-government bodies in contributing to considerable sustainable achievements for the market garden community.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Recommendations from this project focus on three major areas of concern for the CALD market garden community. They are:

1. Occupational Health and Safety
2. Government Agencies - Access and Consultation
3. Responsibility for Ongoing Work with the Community

**1 Occupational Health and Safety**

- That Federal Government enact legislation requiring the labels of products containing pesticides be developed in plain English (or an alternate format e.g.: pictograms)
- That the Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) develop a *mandatory* national co-ordinated approach to the monitoring and recording of data on adverse events, including acute and chronic exposure of humans to agricultural chemicals
- That initial work commenced with Sydney University be expanded to ensure that Occupational Health and Safety issues are addressed in this population so as to ensure the risk of poor long-term health outcomes are reduced.

**2 Government Agencies - Access and Consultation**

- That all Government Departments whose charter includes working with farming communities, or working in rural and semi-rural areas with CALDB populations, include market garden communities on small acreage across the Sydney Basin as important constituents in their key strategic directions
- That in any future planning the NSW Government takes into account the important contribution, such as availability of fresh fruit and vegetables and the rural amenity, that market garden growers make to the NSW economy when planning urban development in the rural and semi-rural areas of the Sydney Basin.
3 Responsibility for Ongoing Work with the Community

- That CALD market gardeners be a target group for Area Multicultural Health Planning, Primary and Community Health and Population Health Units of those Area Health Services (AHS) which have jurisdiction over the semi-rural areas of the Sydney Basin.

- That a rural worker be appointed by NSW Health to build on the model of project development implemented with the Chinese community. The worker would focus on the broad issues of health for women and their families of other CALDB language groups who work on market gardens in the Sydney Basin. The cultural backgrounds of other grower groups include: Cambodian, Arabic, Vietnamese, Korean, Italian and Maltese background growers.
BACKGROUND

In 2001 WHAW identified “Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALDB) working in market gardens across the Sydney Basin” as its initial project for 2001 – 2004 (Strong, 2001).

WHAW decided to commence working with the women from Chinese backgrounds who spoke Cantonese based on information in Parker (2000), who identified that the Cantonese speaking community working in the market gardens across the Sydney Basin wanted to access further information from key services. The proposed work met the key principles for allocation of resources by WHAW as set out in its Strategic and Business Plan 2001 – 2004 (Strong, 2001).

INTRODUCTION

People of Chinese background in Australia

Chinese immigrants arrived in Australia firstly as traders prior to European settlement and then from the 1780’s as indentured labourers, convicts and free settlers. However their numbers did not become significant until the gold rush era of the 1850’s in Victoria and the 1860’s in New South Wales, when there were estimated to be 50,000 Chinese living here – (Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation 2003). The Chinese commenced market gardening as the gold mining became less profitable from the 1870’s. By the early 1900’s approximately one third of all Chinese in Australia were working in market gardens. The market gardens were originally located in city suburbs such as Alexandria, Botany and Rockdale, and the Chinese populations grew up around them.

Market gardeners pooled their labour, with as many as ten from a clan working cooperatively. They used hand made tools and worked long hours in this very labour intensive industry (Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation 2003). Market gardens that remain in the Phillip Bay area are now listed on the NSW Heritage Register.

There has been a steady increase in the number of settler arrivals in Australia from China. In 1982-3 there were 1,167 people from China who came as settlers. This number increased to 6,708 in 2001-2 (ABS 2004), however, there are no data on what type of employment the settlers undertook following their arrival in Australia.
Agriculture in New South Wales

At the outset, it should be clearly stated that gathering data regarding agriculture in the Sydney Basin is difficult. Current data collection is inadequate and unhelpful when attempting to access information related to small acre farms, as most agricultural information pertains to broad acre farming.

The Australian Year Book 2004 on Characteristics of Australian Farms (ABS NSW Office Cat no 1301.1) states that as at 30th June 2002 there were 831 establishments undertaking vegetable growing in the whole of NSW (ABS 2004). When WHAW commenced working in the Sydney Basin it was estimated that there were 400 Chinese farms in that area alone. (This discrepancy in numbers between the ABS figures and the numbers of farmers with whom WHAW have worked, would seem to indicate that the ABS figures relate to broad acre farmers only, disregarding the many small acre farms across the Sydney Basin).

The years 1997-2002 showed a decline in the number of people employed in agriculture from 4,044 to 3,760 people. This figure includes persons who worked without pay for at least one hour per week in a family business e.g. on a farm and unpaid family helpers (ABS 2004). While numbers of people decreased in those years the gross value of agricultural commodities increased. In the years 1997–2002 the value of vegetables increased from 1,662.3 million dollars to 2,268.5 million (ABS 2004). This amount however includes vegetables that most CALDB growers do not grow, such as potatoes and carrots.

Agriculture in the Sydney Basin

The Sydney Basin stretches from the Hills District in the northwest through to Badgerys Creek and Camden in the South, and to the foothills of the Blue Mountains in the West. The two main rivers that flow through the Sydney Basin are the Hawkesbury and Nepean Rivers. The Hawkesbury/ Nepean catchment covers an area of 2.5% of NSW but provides 15% of the State’s agricultural produce. It provides not only leafy green vegetables and mushrooms, but also oysters, prawns, poultry, eggs and dairy produce (Moxon et al 1999). As most of the vegetables grown by CALDB growers have to reach market quickly to maintain their quality, the majority of the CALDB growers farm within one or two hours drive from the central Flemington markets.

Figure 1 demonstrates the boundaries of the Sydney Basin, the number of identified farms, the number of hectares under cultivation and the Country of Birth (COB) of farmers from CALD backgrounds in each district (Australian Bureau of Statistics CDATA2001).

Horticulture in the Sydney Basin has been estimated to contribute between 2 billion a year ‘from the farm gate’ to the economy of NSW. This includes up to 90% of Sydney’s leafy green vegetables (Mason 2003, Moxon et al 1999). This is estimated to be one-eighth of the gross value of agricultural production of the State (Amery, J. Hansard 6 NSW DEC 2001).

Mason, D. of New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) has said “The average return per hectare for agriculture in New South Wales is $136 while the average return per hectare in the Sydney Basin is $5,500" (Landline 2/3/2003).
FIGURE 1
Agriculture within Local Government Area Boundaries in Western Sydney

(These figures are drawn from the 2001 ABS data and include all agricultural enterprises)

- Includes identified Chinese, Maltese & Korean
- Includes identified Italian, Maltese, Chinese, Korean, & Taiwanese
- Includes identified Chinese, Maltese
- Includes identified Lebanese, Iraqi, Chinese, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Korean, Taiwanese
- Includes identified Lebanese, Iraqi, Chinese, Cambodian, Vietnamese

Map based on 2001 Collection
District Boundaries of Western Sydney
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics CADATA2001

Source: Regional Statistics NSW 2003
Australian Bureau of Statistics
Catalogue No. 1362.1
Table 1 (Sinclair 2004) demonstrates NSW Vegetable Production for 1997 with the Murrumbidgee/Murray areas producing the highest percentages of total vegetable production (24% and 31% respectively). However, when the breakdown of produce between perishable vegetables and those that do not perish as quickly, the picture is quite different.

Table 2 shows the production of Perishable Vegetables in Sydney, for the same period, is far higher that any other area producing vegetables in NSW (Sinclair 2004).

Other reasons for the number of market gardens in the area are access to water along the Hawkesbury/Nepean Rivers catchment, access to ‘mains water’ from major dam systems and reasonable quality soils in the Sydney Basin.

Market gardens are small, intensive, highly productive family farms. The industry has little power in the distribution and price structure for its produce with many growers contracting their crops to the major supermarkets. Growers rarely seek, or qualify, for government assistance in times of hardship, preferring to keep working as best they can without coming to the notice of government authorities.

"It is estimated that more than 80% of market gardens in the Sydney Basin are operated by members of ethnic communities (Ibid). Many have escaped war, civil unrest, invasion and poverty in their home countries. Italians and Maltese arrived after the Second World War, while Lebanese, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Koreans and more recently Iraqis, have arrived following war and unrest in their homelands" (Bayrante et al vi:2003).

The majority of Chinese farmers live and work in the Liverpool, Camden and Leppington areas, with another large group at Llandillo in the Penrith Local Government Area (LGA). A more established group is located in the Hills district, in the northwest of Sydney.

As the urban sprawl expands across the Sydney Basin, and the cost of leasing scare farmland increases, many of the growers are being forced to find new farming areas. More growers are being forced to move to the Wollondilly Shire, which poses new challenges including the transporting of vegetables. Although many of the growers have trucks for moving their produce to the markets, none of the Chinese have refrigerated trucks and many of the vegetables are adversely affected by heat. The growers consider that current government planning initiatives have the potential to erode their choices including, where to farm and be near to markets, being close to schools for their children and close to other Chinese market gardeners.
Table 1: NSW Total Vegetable Production

Sinclair 2004

Table 1 (Sinclair 2004) demonstrates NSW Vegetable Production for 1997 with the Murrumbidgee/Murray areas producing the highest percentages of total vegetable production (24% and 31% respectively). However, when the breakdown of produce between perishable vegetables and those that do not perish as quickly occurs, the picture is quite different. (Table 2)

Table 2: NSW Perishable Production

Sinclair 2004

Table 2 (Sinclair 2004) shows the production of Perishable Vegetables in Sydney, for the same period, is far higher than any other area producing vegetables in NSW.
MARKET GARDENING IN THE SYDNEY BASIN

The Population

People from CALDB employed in horticulture in the Sydney Basin and particularly those working in market gardens experience marginalisation and isolation through the lack of public transport, lack of community infrastructure and long working hours. Women frequently work 16-20 hours a day. While the work on the farm may only take 12 – 14 hours of the day they are also the child carers, the carers of elderly relatives, the cleaners and cooks in the house. Their tasks on the farm expose them to increased risks of incurring occupational health injuries and stressors, which can lead to poor mental health outcomes. In general the English language skills of the women are poor, in addition they have limited "health language" competency which impacts on their ability to obtain relevant information, and make informed decisions about their health.

Associate Professor Dr. Frances Parker, University of Western Sydney (UWS) focused much of her research over the past fifteen years on people from CALDB who work in the horticulture industry across the Sydney Basin. She noted particular issues related to the health and well being of the women (Parker, F. 2000 a & b) including exposure to hazardous chemicals, back injuries, cuts, respiratory disease, dermatitis, and many of the cancers. She also noted that growers attending doctor’s practices dressed smartly and general practitioners might not have been aware of their occupation and inherent risks of pesticide use.

Many growers did not practice or participate in preventative health strategies including routine testing for chemical residue levels. Users of insecticides are advised to undertake a series of diagnostic and residue tests. These include blood and plasma cholinesterase tests to monitor exposure to organophosphate and carbamate insecticides. However, a small group of growers who were encouraged to undertake a blood residue test were questioned as to whether any of them had previously undergone tests for this reason, and it was found none of the growers could recall being tested by a doctor.

These small family farms, function as many family businesses have done over the years, where the whole family, including the wife or partner, sometimes the grandparents and occasionally children, work in the business. The familiar structure of workplace benefits enjoyed by most Australian workers, such as regular fair pay, sick leave, holiday pay and or carers leave, are alien to these Chinese families. Workers' rights are not protected through any industrial agreement or industry union. Additionally for most CALDB growers, the home is also on the farm premises. This can compound the disadvantage for women and children who are living with an abusive or violent partner. There is little delineation between home and work and family tensions can be heightened with no opportunity for escape.
There is a dearth of recent literature on the health and well being of CALDB populations. Schofield, (1990) writing about the Health of the Immigrant Australian, noted that the type of industries that this population works in, contributes to the risk of long-term physical injuries and the high rate of underreported workplace injury. Alcorso, (2002) discusses issues in communication of OH&S information, noting that many workers with limited English were at high risk of work related injuries.

Attempting to capture data on workplace injury is problematic as WorkCover data has limitations. WorkCover only records injuries/incidents when a worker has required seven or more consecutive day's sick leave, as the result of an injury, or when serious accidents/incidents are reported, eg: the death of a worker. Data collected do not contain an identifier, such as ‘Language other than English’ (LOTE), (Strong, 2004). Additionally, there is scant information on the incidence of adverse events from the use of chemicals in Australia, including acute and chronic exposure of humans to agricultural chemicals, (Appendix 7). Reporting of such incidents is not mandatory and no single authority has responsibility for developing this data. It is considered doubtful that a market gardener would present to a general practitioner requesting a sick leave certificate, consequently such data from this group is unlikely to be captured by Workcover.

Working with the population

Many within the Chinese population reported that they previously had suffered under an authoritarian regime in China, and were wary of workers from bureaucracies coming onto their land, fearing that the people from Government might be gathering information to use against them. Although China has signed International Human Rights agreements, these have not been ratified. Many of the growers reported experiencing restrictions in freedom of assembly, expression and the press before coming to Australia. They also reported that as rural people they were treated differently from people who lived in the city. The impact of their backgrounds in rural China has led the Chinese growers to work hard while tending to keep to themselves, wanting only to make a better life for their families.

In response to this, the project staff ensured that sufficient time would be allocated for both project workers, and the community to establish trust in their relationships. Staff also needed to be aware that previous experiences with government authorities in their country of origin would impact on how they viewed government representatives in Australia.

In Daring to Act (2001), workers noted that Vietnamese women outworkers in the clothing industry, thought that ‘the government’ could not to be trusted. They regarded any government officer or program that sought to assist people with great cynicism, and Unions were perceived as instruments of the government, and as suggested above, a similar attitude was likely to be adopted by the Chinese in Australia.
Women of Chinese background at work on the market gardens across the Sydney Basin
The first English course was held in a growers shed and was developed in partnership with Miller TAFE Outreach Program.

English class graduation - classes are now held in Leppinton Primary School.

Computer classes developed in partnership with Leppington Primary School and Miller TAFE Outreach Program.
PROJECT APPROACH

Methodology

The project was built on a community development model using the processes of action research to test each step of the work with the Chinese women. This method of consultation, implementation and review was most effective and provided project workers and the community the flexibility to make changes in the project directions as required (Hawe et al 1993, Macdonald 1998).

Management model

The project was allocated funding for four consecutive years, enabling project staff to build and maintain strong, healthy relationships with the community and other service providers. The project funding provided one part time project officer (24 hours per week), one sessional Chinese community worker, an accredited interpreter as required and a goods and service budget to cover the added expenses of appropriate refreshments for people undertaking hard physical labour. In addition a car was purchased to cover the 15,000 kilometres traveled each year visiting the farms and providing the information sessions. The WHAW Program Manager also supported the work of the project team.

With the relatively vast distances to cover across the Sydney Basin it was necessary to develop a model of project management that could facilitate the flow of information, allowing all services access to knowledge of the grower’s current concerns, while avoiding duplication of the use of project worker skills, and resources. In addition to meeting the needs of the growers, it was also quite apparent that no one organisation could fund such a broad project and consequently successful service provider collaboration was critical.

Through extensive inter-sectoral collaboration three working groups evolved, one in each of the key areas of grower population i.e.: Camden in the south-west area, the Hills District in the north west and the Hawkesbury/Nepean District in the west. This proved to be a very successful model and assisted the project in its work with the Chinese market gardeners. Each working group had representation from the key services in that area, while a number of services with broader portfolios NSW DPI, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), WHAW and the University of Western Sydney (UWS) research projects (New South Wales Environmental Trust (NSW ET) and New South Wales Department of Women (NSW DoW), were also represented on one or more working groups.

While there were commonalities in the role of the working groups, each group developed its own focus and approach to working with the community. The Camden group focused its work very heavily on the women and children, while the Hills District group’s focus was more on obtaining speakers for the group on topics of interest relevant to their business, or on the role and access to government and non-government services. The Hawkesbury Nepean group developed as a key group that lobbied peak government agencies on matters of relevance to the growers. This group has now changed its focus and is working more extensively with the CALDB grower communities in its geographical areas.
As each new issue affecting the lives and businesses of the growers arose, the working groups either made deputation on behalf of the growers (Appendix 6 & 7) or corresponded with relevant agencies on behalf of the growers. Through this assistance in the process of resolving their problems, the growers became better informed of the relevant agencies whose regulations impacted on their businesses. Correspondingly, in many instances, this communication highlighted the existence of the community to government agencies.

Each meeting agenda had a dedicated item, where activities and projects initiated independently by its members, were reported back to the group. This open format of updating the group on a regular basis, kept members well informed on the current status of work being undertaken with the growers.

Getting to know the communities

One of the foremost concerns for project workers was to be able to communicate effectively with the growers. Previous projects had unsuccessfully attempted to communicate information in written English (Appendix 7). As previously stated, many men and most of the women, had limited spoken English language and literacy skills. In addition, according to key informants, many of the older growers would not have undertaken education past 12 or 13 years of age and therefore, also had low literacy levels in their own language. It was decided that ‘face to face’ communication would be the most effective method of communicating with the growers. Consequently, interaction with them was made possible through the skills of bi-lingual community workers (BCWs). The value of these workers’ contribution to the outcomes of the project cannot be overstated. The primary contact for WHAW with the Camden southwest area community was by a bi-lingual worker who spoke English, Mandarin and Cantonese (the language spoken by most of the market gardeners). She lived in the district and consequently knew many of the growers and their families and her willingness and enthusiasm for the project was invaluable. The bi-lingual health worker from Hills Community Health (HCH) played a key role in initially bringing growers, WHAW and Hills Community Aid (HCA) together. The UWS ET bi-lingual project worker accessed growers in the Hills, providing information on horticultural issues and other services and encouraging the growers to undertake pesticide training.

Getting to know the women

The first phase of the project for WHAW was spent in getting to know the women. Project workers drove from farm to farm to meet the women and gather information about the issues of their daily lives. This helped to overcome some barriers and provided WHAW with the opportunity to get to know other family members including husbands, children and elderly parents. Where relevant, visits were made to the farms with agencies including NSW TAFE, Nepean Migrant Access (NMA) & HCH. Integrating visits in this manner also limited the impact on the workload of growers.

From the commencement of the project, it was acknowledged that the immediate needs of the women would have to be met before they would accept the opportunity to address other issues, such as ‘health’. WHAW began to address those needs as they arose on the farms for
A day at the beach and space to run and play

The English class visits an apple orchard

Women experiencing their first picnic

Families enjoy a break from the farm

A school holiday outing for the children, their mothers and grandmothers
Presentation from the NSW EPA on the new government pesticide regulations and their impact on the grower community

Service providers attended the Chinese growers Field Day 2003 developed in partnership with Camden Council

A presentation on the effects of the proposed Metro Plan 2005

WHAW and NMA get to know the women over a light meal
the women, who, after a time, were ready to listen to information relating to health and occupational safety issues. The immediate needs and issues of the women ranged from the lack of English proficiency and transport to the lack of child care. Their lack of understanding of Australian government systems, exacerbated by their limited English language skills caused constant frustration in communicating with bureaucracies such as local government. The problems surrounding the development applications for packing sheds and the frequent disputes with surrounding neighbours over spraying of pesticides were ever recurring issues for the growers.

Health promotion strategies were determined to be the most appropriate method of informing and educating the women. Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and improve their health (World Health Organisation, (WHO, 1986). Evidence relating to positive results of effective health promotion techniques demonstrates that communities with control over their health and workplaces have better health outcomes than those with little or no control over these aspects of their lives.

The vital opportunity

In most community development work there is a ‘trigger’ that acts as a key to the community, enabling workers to legitimately engage with, and be accepted and trusted by, that community. For WHAW the trigger occurred within the first few months of commencing the project, when the NSW Government passed legislation requiring all users of chemicals for commercial purposes, to undertake accredited training, and obtain a certificate of registration enabling them to use pesticides in their businesses. This provided WHAW with an ideal opportunity to collaborate with project partners in implementing the "Safe use of Pesticides" training.

The growers were very keen to gain their certification in the use of pesticides as their livelihood now depended on them passing the course. Visits were continually made to farms to recruit participants. UWS ET Project focused on recruiting growers living in the Hills District, while WHAW and the UWS ET Project recruited participants in the semi-rural areas of South western Sydney, the Botany and Matraville areas, and Llandilo.

These individual visits to the farms were necessary to ensure all growers were aware of the training programs. The time spent visiting farms and talking with the women was extremely valuable and discussions between the bi-lingual workers and the men and women, eventually led to the men supporting the women to attend the training. These visits proved very useful for WHAW, giving an insight into the lives of the growers that might otherwise never have been obtained.

Training Courses for "The Safe Use of Pesticides"

When training courses for the "Safe Use of Pesticides" were initially offered, the men working on the farms were keen to undertake the course and receive their accreditation. Parker. F. (2000) established that many of the women also sprayed chemicals but few if any, were undertaking training. In 2001, NSW DPI and the NSW Premiers Project - Market Gardening
in a Culturally Diverse Society (MGCDS) set up the first training for market garden women. NSW TAFE employed the trainer and funding was through the MGCDS. NSW DPI using the SMARTTRAIN course presented this initial training.

Following the women’s training, funding for training both men and women was obtained through Farmbis and presented by G. M. Rural Training - a registered training organisation (RTO) based on the course developed by Chemcert. Training courses were set up in the different geographic areas to ensure easy access by growers who, as stated previously, often had difficulty with transport.

G.M. Rural Training, UWS ET Project and WHAW worked closely to translate the relevant portions of the training manual into Chinese. UWS ET funded the translating of the manual and Chemcert funded the printing. This enabled growers to take home information in their language for reference at a later date. For the first time, while doing farming work in Australia, growers had information in a language they could read and in a format that was applicable to their style of farming. This information, now available to the growers in Chinese, was crucial in communicating OH&S legislation, particularly relating to the labeling of pesticides (Bayrante et al (2003).

The "Safe Use of Pesticide" training courses were mainly held in local community halls close to the farms, while some were held on farms. The course required attendance at two days of training. The training sessions were held over two weeks, so growers were only required to leave their farms for one day, per week. However, to fulfill the course requirements and obtain the certificate, each participant had to attend both days, and successfully finish an examination at the end of training.

**Introduction of a Health Module**

WHAW identified a number of issues around the ‘Safe Use of Pesticide” course.

- There was insufficient emphasis on the adverse effects of the incorrect use of pesticides on health
- The message of compliance with the wearing of personal protective apparel should be made more relevant to the growers (men and women)
- It needed to be made relevant to the action of the chemicals used in their business
- There was a need for greater understanding of the potential adverse effects on the health of the user and / or others, who came in contact with the pesticides.

The community had very limited health education or knowledge in general and severely limited information on the use of pesticides. To address this WHAW, UWS DoW project and Sydney South West Area Health Service (SSWAHS), developed the framework on which WHAW built a simplified health component to be used in conjunction with the reworked "Safe Use of Pesticide" training course. The health component was delivered by WHAW project workers in the training programs and was then adapted to be used by non-health trained personnel, with other trainers also being able to use this module with success (Appendix 4).
WHAW presents the Health Module during the “Safe Use of Pesticides” Training

NSW DPI attend Hawkesbury Information Day 2003

The community enjoy performing Tai Chi
Children and mothers attending the Little Panda Playgroup 2005

Children attend the Chinese Community Language School every Sunday morning held in Leppington Primary School
Childcare

One of the most concerning aspects of their work for the women on the farms was the issue of childcare. They talked about the long hours they had to work, leaving the children in the house, either in the care of older siblings, sometimes alone, or else with elderly parents – this caused them great distress. Some parents reported having to send young children back to China to be cared for by other relatives until they were school age. This also caused great anguish to the parents especially when the children failed to recognise their parents and were unable to relate to them when they returned to Australia.

Parents also had limited opportunity to engage in play with children and were not aware of the benefits of play for the child’s development. As the result of further discussion with the women, a playgroup was established where the mothers and children could play and learn together (Appendix 2). Guidance for parents learning the skills of interacting and learning with their children and the playgroup activities in general, was initially provided by Jumbunna Project Children’s Support Worker supported by the WHAW project officer and the Chinese community worker.

Valuing Culture

A major concern for parents was that the older children were losing the culture of their homeland. The parents wanted the children to be able to speak Mandarin and also to learn about the culture of the land of their parents and grandparent’s birth. Initially a small group of women met to discuss these issues and this was quickly followed by the formation of a committee. The committee formed an Association that later became incorporated with an Australian Business Number (ABN) and the next step was to employ a Mandarin teacher – with this the South West Children’s Chinese School Inc. was established (Appendix 3).

Service Providers and the CALDB grower community

As previously noted many of the Chinese growers had scant knowledge or understanding of the roles of government and non-government services available to Australian citizens. In Australia most documentation and communication is in English while some government departments have contact details in LOTE.

While all government departments are able to access free interpreter services and may provide access to translations of their information, it was not uncommon to speak with growers who had either not heard about, or had any contact with, key departments including Centrelink, Sydney Water, NSW DoCS and local community health centres.

Local government is responsible for approving new developments such as packing sheds and also managing complaints from neighbouring properties. Growers reported that contact with local councils was frequently unsatisfactory. When the Chinese community worker was eventually employed by a local council she reported back that many council officers were unfamiliar with the use of the Telephone Interpreting Service (TIS). Not all local governments had instigated cross-cultural training for their staff. This often resulted in frustration for all
involved while disputes remained unresolved. When growers were asked if they had received letters from local councils on particular issues, it was not uncommon to be informed that they had received correspondence, but as it was in English the growers had ‘disposed of the letter’. Growers frequently asked WHAW to intervene on their behalf and to help overcome some of these barriers (Appendix 6).

To address these issues, numerous service information days were held in partnership with local, State and Federal services where Cantonese interpreters were engaged and funded by WHAW (Appendix 1). Coincidentally, it became apparent from these meetings, that many of the key service providers were unaware of this community, who were resident in their geographical areas of responsibility. These changes have proven to be mutually beneficial.

New South Wales Department of Primary Industry (NSW DPI) and New South Wales Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW DEC)

Both these government agencies (DPI & NSW DEC) have played a role within the horticultural industry in NSW for many years. The NSW DPI is considered a key service provider of information to farmers on both broad and small acre holdings. The NSW DEC now plays a key role in monitoring the registration of chemical users in horticulture and the effect of adverse impacts on land and waterways.

The project partners have worked closely with both the NSW DPI and DEC by continuing to advocate on behalf of the growers. The issues raised through advocacy have been acknowledged and during the life of the project both agencies employed bi-lingual community educators (BCEs). Currently the NSW DEC is funding positions based in the NSW DPI for Chinese (Cantonese), Arabic, Khmer (Cambodian) and Vietnamese-speaking growers. This funding ceases in mid 2005.

Local Government Initiatives

Camden Council took the lead and obtained funding through the Macarthur Area Assistance Scheme (MACAAS) to employ a Cantonese speaking community development officer. The successful applicant was at the time employed by WHAW. With a bi-lingual worker involved, Council staff were able to communicate with the Cantonese speaking community and many improvements were made within the council and its service provision to the community. Innovative outreach strategies were implemented by Camden Council, including the inclusion of Chinese language books in the public library for children. This is now a well-utilised resource within the community.

In 2004 Hawkesbury and Penrith Councils supported an application by NMA to South West Sydney Area Health Service (SWSAHS) for a Rural Migrant Community Development worker. NMA was successful in receiving a four-year grant for this project.
The invisible communities - drought and water restrictions

During the course of the project, NSW was experiencing a devastating drought and the Federal Government developed a drought relief package for affected farmers. Sydney Basin growers were not considered to be ‘farmers’ under the definition applied to determine eligibility for assistance. Bi-lingual project workers from WHAW, ACCA, HCH and NSW ET worked alongside other community based services to advocate on behalf of the growers. After some time agencies that were providing ‘drought relief’ acknowledged that this community had not been considered in their deliberations. Consequently, changes were made to the guidelines enabling the growers to obtain some relief in a time of real need.

The lack of water and saleable produce resulted in a desperate shortage of food for some members of the community. Many were not able to make sufficient money to purchase groceries. Subsequently, contact was made with NSW DOCS who provided food parcels that were distributed by WHAW and the Camden Council bi-lingual worker to the families in need.

Similarly when water restrictions were being implemented throughout the Sydney catchment area, discussions were arranged between the growers and Sydney Water. The vegetable crops grown by many of the growers required short periods of spraying at regular intervals rather than a long soaking once or twice a day. The morning and evening watering regimes that were to be introduced would have been detrimental to the crops in the Sydney Basin. Successful submissions were made by UWS ETP and WHAW to the authority, following which, the growers were able to water their vegetables in a manner that would prevent significant crop loss, yet still be able to comply with the authorities regulatory requirements. Discussion with Sydney Water occurred with each change in the restrictions throughout 2003-5.

Then in 2003, the outer lying north western areas of Sydney experienced a destructive hail storm that destroyed vegetable crops, cracking much of the irrigation equipment and splitting plastic igloos. Following representation to State and local government authorities some growers were able to obtain low interest loans to repair the damage to their equipment – it would be 6-8 weeks before any crops would be grown for sale and the families have an income again.

For a complete list of Information Sessions developed in partnership for the Chinese grower community see Appendix 1.
EVALUATION OF THE CHINESE MARKET GARDEN PROJECT

Evidence

Evaluation of community development projects has always been problematic. However, despite the limitations of evaluation, this project sets out to evaluate its work over the past four years. This report contains an evaluation of the project outcomes for the women market gardeners, their families and the community.

A community based health promotion approach was used based on qualitative outcomes such as collaboration, empowerment, participation, capacity building and equity, all of which can be in opposition to measuring outcomes (Judd, J. Frankish, C. J. and Moulton, G. 2001).

The project team has drawn on outcomes from the 5th Global Health Promotion Conference in 2000, where it was proposed that evaluation should recognise “the importance of equity in conducting locally determined evaluation, and should emphasise the use of participatory approaches and multi-sectoral involvement in evaluation”.

Tacchi (2003) claims the use of a ‘toolbox of evaluation techniques” is useful in the evaluation of research which includes observation and participant observation, keeping of field notes, in-depth interviews and group discussions. It would seem these tools are the most suitable to use in evaluating the outcomes of this project.

PROJECT OUTCOMES FOR THE COMMUNITY

The evaluation of the Chinese market garden project was a complex process, bearing in mind the work described thus far. There are distinct and different areas of the project to assess including:

- what difference did the project make to the lives of the women and their workplace practices?
- how did the project affect changes in government and non-government agencies?
CHANGES IN THE WOMEN’S LIVES

Two methods of evaluating the project outcomes were used to measure the changes in the lives of the women. They were:

- By observation
- Through interviews with the women

BY OBSERVATION

One of the most exciting changes in the women was in their level of confidence as they confronted issues that they would have previously identified as insurmountable. The project team observed that the women had developed many ‘new found’ skills providing them with confidence to make the following changes:-

CONFIDENCE TO LEAVE THE FARM

In the early days of the project, workers organised an Information Day that was held in Kemps Creek. It was developed between key government and non-government services presenting information useful for rural and semi-rural communities. Information presented was in Cantonese, and bi-lingual workers were able to communicate with community members. At this meeting, one Chinese woman held tightly onto the skirt of the WHAW bi-lingual community worker all day for fear of getting lost. She knew no English, did not know her home address and had only left the farm occasionally by car and then only in the presence of her husband. The same woman, two years later, had attended conversational English classes. She is now able to say her name, address and telephone number in English. She has written other information in a notebook, which she uses to assist her when she needs help. She is happy to leave the farm with project staff and feels very happy to be able to get off the farm more regularly.

Another woman had been a community ‘foot doctor’ in China. She is now the wife of a grower and works very hard on the farm. She had leadership strengths that were recognised at the beginning of the project. She was a very cheerful and gregarious lady who had little contact with her community because of the length of time she needed to work. She came to two Outreach English courses run by TAFE Outreach and her English language skills and confidence in using her many other skills improved. She loves to cook and enjoys gatherings of the community. She not only talks to project staff, but also was pleased to be able to speak English on shopping and banking excursions that were held to assist the women in increasing daily living skills. She initially met with other women from the Chinese growing community and then the meetings became more regular, reaching the point where the group now has a support network, speaking with each other by phone on a regular basis.
CONFIDENCE TO USE COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

Some women who came to the first English language class had never used an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM). They had been given cards quite some time previously and had even remembered the Personal Identification Number (PIN), but had not known how to use the machine. After learning the vocabulary around banking they were taken to an ATM and taught how to use their cards. They were thrilled that they could access their money from the machines and not have to wait in queues in the bank. One of the husbands was also very pleased that his wife passed on the information to him, and he also started making use of the ATM, rather than queuing, as he had done in the past.

CONFIDENCE TO APPLY FOR WORK

Camden Council applied and received funding for a community development officer position. The bi-lingual community worker contracted by WHAW to work on the initial phase of this project was encouraged to apply for the position. She was successful in her application. She said that "had it not been for working with the project partnership group she would never have felt confident enough to apply for a job in Australia, working under Australian conditions". But because she had been supported and given encouragement to do things outside of her initial training she had felt confident enough to apply and was very pleased that this new position would enable her to work more closely with the Chinese community for whom she felt a great affinity.

CONFIDENCE TO RUN A PLAYGROUP

Young women attending a focus group, held to discuss the mother’s issues of concern on caring for their children, expressed their need to form a playgroup. A small group of mothers met with workers from WHAW, Camden Council, Rossmore Pre-school and Playgroup NSW Inc. A forum was established and the mothers were assisted to develop a playgroup. Rossmore Pre-school obtained funding to buy equipment for setting up the fledgling playgroup.

Project officers observed that the mothers showed little understanding of the concept of a playgroup or indeed of playing with their children. Ongoing discussions between Playgroup NSW Inc and Karitane identified resources through NSW Government Family First Funding that resulted in a trained bi-lingual early childhood worker being employed to assist the mothers in learning the skills of teaching cognitive and manipulative learning principles, through play. WHAW and Camden Council arranged transport to take the parents and the children to the playgroup. The mothers now arrange their own transport, phone other mothers to remind them about the playgroup, and have assumed responsibility for the running of the playgroup on a regular basis. This playgroup will be sustained through Karitane and Playgroup NSW Inc in association with Jumbunna Toy Library with WHAW taking on administrative and ongoing supportive roles (Appendix 2).
CONFIDENCE TO COMMENCE AND MANAGE A CHILDREN’S LANGUAGE SCHOOL

The women had talked about starting a Chinese Language School for their children. The project team observed that the children had assimilated rapidly into Australian culture and that the parents were anxious that the children retain an understanding of the language and culture of their parents. As a result of discussions, a group of the women gathered together to form an association, that would supervise the development and management of the language school. In developing the school, women have opened a bank account for the school, applied for and received an Australian Business Number (ABN), and have incorporated their association and arranged payment of insurance premiums needed to run the school. The group employed a teacher to teach Mandarin and applied to the Leppington Primary School to hold the classes on school premises on Sundays. Additionally, parents organise the opening and closing of the school, receipting of the fees from the students, paying of the teacher and other day to day issues with running the school.

The classes have now been running for three years with three teachers employed to teach the 60 children who regularly attend. The success of this initiative has encouraged parents in the Llandilo/Berkshire Park areas to commence a new class on Saturdays at Llandilo Primary School. They are currently applying for government funding for the school (Appendix 3).

CONFIDENCE TO ALLOW CHILDREN TO PLAY WITH OTHERS

During school holidays a series of ‘holiday activities’ especially for children of Cantonese speaking backgrounds living on farms has been developed through CACRC and Jumbunna Toy Library. This process is now in its third year and the growers now trust the project staff to the extent that they are happy for them to pick up their children for these activities. These activities will be continued by CACRC and the Jumbunna Toy Library with some of the parents agreeing to provide transport for the children.

CONFIDENCE TO MEET AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER

From about twelve months into the project many women stated that they were very pleased to be able to leave the farm independently of family members, (usually their husband), having to provide transport. They are now meeting regularly with each other and providing support in between times by telephone. They are also confident enough to contact project staff to obtain information on situations that occur on the farm that they do not understand. As an outcome from this contact they are then confident to obtain advice from the appropriate service provider.
CONFIDENCE TO ARRANGE OUTINGS

Against the background of isolation for the women, their lack of transport and infrequent opportunities for sharing simple pleasures, project staff organised a ferry trip around Sydney Harbour. After the trip, they stated that ‘this had been the best day of their lives’. They were so excited to see the Harbour Bridge. Some of them had lived in the Sydney Basin for 15 years but had never traveled further than Cabramatta or Parramatta (a distance of 10 – 15 kilometres from where they live). These same women are now finding out about places to visit and taking the initiative in booking outings, collecting the money from other women, organising the ‘pick up’ points and making other arrangements so that trips are planned and organised largely by them.

CONFIDENCE TO OBTAIN INCREASED KNOWLEDGE ON WOMEN’S HEALTH MATTERS, AND A RAISED AWARENESS OF SAFE WORKPLACE PRACTICES.

Women’s health information sessions assisted the women in learning the anatomy and physiology of their bodies, and following these sessions a number of women had their initial PAP test and breast examination with a local women’s health service.

The mothers were very concerned for the health of their children and the inherent dangers of living in a semi-rural setting, and were keen to participate in and learn the technique for CPR.

The ‘Safe use in Pesticide' Training Health Module increased women’s knowledge on the adverse side – effects of contamination from pesticides, and a raised awareness of the need for personal protection when using pesticides.

Work undertaken in partnership between WHAW and the University of Sydney encouraged women to attempt a change of practice in their daily work routine, including taking multiple short breaks and adapting positions to relieve stress on their musculoskeletal systems (Appendix 5).
INTERVIEWS WITH WOMEN

To further determine the degree of change in the women’s lives and through them, in the community, interviews were held with five women who had participated in the project from its early days. The interviews were conducted towards the end of the project officer’s work, however, that said, WHAW believe the transcripts of those interviews provide credible evidence of change. To capture the voices of the women and ensure the integrity of the content, the interviews which were conducted in Cantonese and interpreted back into English are included in their entirety. The women’s identities have been concealed to ensure privacy while initials of other people that they met have been used for the same reason.

Woman (1)

1 Going back, before the first meeting that we ever had, even before we started English classes can you describe what life was like for you?

I worked on the farm I was a housewife and mother of the children. I worked on the farm and grew okra and eggplant it was very interesting job. I knew T. H. and a lot of the men. The men came to see my husband for help with their machines. The Department of Agriculture was looking for someone to do things with the Chinese community. T. H. talked to A. S. He came and meet me here at the house and said they wanted me to work for them. He had tried translation the information and he wanted extra work done. I didn’t speak to many women. I left the farm often to take the children to school and to piano and things like that and also to send the things (vegetables) to the agent. I always drove myself, I had my license from 1990. I came to Australia in 1989 and got my license a year or two later.

2 Can you remember when you first met anyone from WHAW? Where was that and why did you go to the meeting?

First met V. S. at the Hills Community Centre. They were trying to set up a pesticide course. I will never forget that day it took me two hours to get to the Hills. I looked up my map to go and decided to go to Parramatta and go that way. When I got to Church Street it was blocked which hadn’t been on my map then I went round and round to Victoria road then back to the Windsor Road. Going back was just as bad too, awful. I went to the Blacktown area and then went to St Clair. It was very long. I got the invite from D. A. He was the project officer looking to set up a course for pesticides for the women. I went with another women her name was W. T. She wasn’t a grower just another woman friend. I needed to go with someone and she was interested. There were lots of people there, J.M., B.T., F. P., D.M., and D.A., and someone else who was growing persimmons.

At the end they asked me what I thought the community needed and I said they needed to be educated. When looking at the farms here they were worse off here than they were in China because here they didn’t know the language and how to get around and do things- in China at least they knew that!
3 WHAW has helped organise many training courses such as the pesticide-training course, English classes, and computer classes. Have you taken part in any of that training and if so what did you attend?

Not sure of what training courses there were. Know that F.P., and D.A., after the meeting got J.M., to send out flyer to training. They didn’t have anywhere to go so I said they could use my house. J.M., called a couple of women; I called a couple of women. Then there was the first day of the Information at Kemps Creek Bowling Club where I met L.M., and M.

What interested me most of all the training sessions was the interpreter training how to use the telephone interpreter – because the language is the barrier between people and services. By getting that information it allowed them to move forward like building up.

4 WHAW has also helped organise outings for the community. Did you go on any of those and if so where did you go and what did you think of the outing?

O gosh, so many. To the Blue Mountains it nearly gave me a heart attack, that going down on the railway to the bottom it was very frightening. We took only women and children to Shell Harbour – the bus driver had to ring up to find his way. We took the Camden Council bus and we took the women to see the Maltese farms. We also took the Camden bus with Miller TAFE and took the people to Liverpool Hospital to find out how it worked and also taught them how to use the bank (ATM). Before the project I only went on outings with the family never with anyone from any community.

... and to the Fish Market at this day it was good we played with the children. In China you don't have anything like that,.. you don’t play games with the children at the picnic.

5 WHAW has also helped organise information days. Which ones have you attended and can you remember what was discussed at any of them?

We have had Centrelink – they talked about parenting payments and lots of other things to do with what the government can give you, parenting training. DIPNR, NSW Ag they talked about disease and fungus. We had a Field Day, Waterwise training, information on water restrictions and NSW DOCS with information about drought. We had financial planning to see if you can get Farm Help, also Immigration - what were the rules.

6 Did you find any of the information that you have heard over the last four years interesting and why?

All of the information helps the growers. I know that it is very good to know things like childcare and family allowance I always learn something new.

7 Can you describe how your life has changed over the last four years? Do you have more friends, do you go out more often, and do you feel you can cope with life a bit better now?

I have changed a lot. It has been a big thing for the family. Personally I feel more confident now. Before even if I knew I was right I didn’t stand up for myself. Before I didn’t say anything. The
confidence has made a big difference. I know I can communicate more sensibly. Four years ago my husband was my god. He knows everything, now I think I know more than him. Before he called me a silly women, before when I asked he looked at me as though why didn’t I know it, now I look back I can see the Chinese women are the same. I can see we came from a different culture, different place. We didn’t know. Lucky I keep questioning.

Before at home even though I was busy I would come back to cook lunch for my husband. I did it firstly because he was the god and secondly because I loved him and thirdly because of the culture I did it. In China the country and city are different. The countrywomen have a lower education, they don’t question. In the city the city women and men are more level, they can do the same thing. It is different now, I can tell him to bugger off, I am not going to do whatever I don’t feel like doing. Before you worry about divorce, now you don’t. Now you know you don’t make men happier by being the servant you have to sort it out. Love does not mean you have to do everything. My husband is proud of my achievements. In another way he feels proud but on the other hand he feels he has lost me. Before we always used to talk, talk to the children, talk to each other now we don’t have the same things to talk about. Before we would talk about what growers had come to talk about the machines would make conversation about all the things.

Now on Saturdays there is lots of work, no time to talk. Before I started working I had lots of patience, now more tense not as relaxed. Before I was more patient now I just answer back and give them looks, I don’t wait patiently. I think I go back to the position I was in China I could talk to the people, I managed my work I was confident to do anything. When I came to this country I went down to lower level because of the language problems not confident to move to the level and now I feel that I am at the same level as everyone else.

I need to find a balance with the children and family. I think it was also good for the kids before my daughter wanted to be a doctor or lawyer now she says she want to work with the community to be like me able to talk to everyone and speak at meetings she would like to do community work.

**8 If you had to pick out three good things that have happened over the last four years what would they be?**

❖ Bring me out from my very narrow, opened me up to experience with dealing with people

❖ Working with you have learned more about culture about talking with people I have learned lots, got a lot more knowledge and confidence

❖ Good in family too the children think that its better now and the wife things have also got better

When working with the grower’s it is all very simple words, I thought there was nothing in there. They don’t have any pretences they tell you exactly what they feel, what they want, how it is.

Really there are three areas that things are now better with the outside, with the family, and with myself. It feels good that there have been such changes with the Chinese women that they are now moving forward, and it good that I have more knowledge and confidence.
I felt lonely before only had friends in the city. My mother laughed about me making friends with the country people. In China there is a big gap between country and city people. I didn’t feel close to this country population only the city friends were too far away. Now I have found what they think, what they do. Four years ago I didn’t think I wanted to be friends that there were difference levels of education. I was working for them but my heart was not in it. Now they have become friends. I was worried about going down to that level in China because the city people talk different use bigger words. The city people would never speak like that. Are always polite and you don’t know what they really mean. You have to know people its so important, you need to know how to communicate.

Woman (2)

1 Going back before the first meeting that we ever had, even before we started English classes can you describe what life was like for you?

I learnt a lot of things from the people come and talked about the chemicals or something else, thank you for all your help. Before we don’t know much, anything about it, yeh. Didn’t know many people in this community. We talked to some people about some problems but not the people in the community. We left the farm we went by car. I drive but not much, close around, but not much. I have been driving since I was 18, but I don’t drive much. Just close short trips. Sometimes I go off the farm once a week, yeh because the kids are here to look after and there is lots of work. We don’t go out much.

2 Can you remember when you first met anyone from WHAW? Where was that and why did you go to the meeting?

First met at Annangrove. We meet you(VS) at the Annangrove Park there. There were many of the community people there, not the growers but the people who work with the community. Yeh, I remember there was D.M., there, he got a beard. I can’t remember who else, some of them we don’t know the names. J.M., was there, B.T., and F.P., yeh, and S.J., and D.A., sometimes we don’t know the names. The first day was the information day.

3 WHAW has helped organise many training courses such as the pesticide-training course, English classes, and computer classes. Have you taken part in any of that training and if so what did you attend?

I have been to the chemical training, yeh the chemical licence and then was the blood test or something and the health information how to spray the fertiliser and the dripping water and they came here and did it they showed it on the farm. You know the way they showed you to do

We had the exercises where they showed us the exercises it was for the back. It didn’t help, oh no. I tried the exercises. I got the leg tired and everything. Usually I don’t do much exercise.
the exercise against the wall like that it was so painful in my legs. At that time we were going to Japan before that a week I was worried I didn’t know if I could handle that. It was better by the time that we went. It took me a week to get better. Usually I don’t do that I thought it was good fun but oh, so sore. No I didn’t do computer or English classes. The people from Centrelink came and NSW DOCS talked about the drought relief. Sydney Water with water restrictions also. I can’t remember anything about the relief or the meeting after the fires in the area.

4. Did you find any of the information that you have heard over the last four years interesting and why? Response included in Q 5

5. WHAW has also helped organise information days. Which ones have you attended and can you remember what was discussed at any of them?

Everything I like it. The most interesting was you talking about the women’s health. Remember you said you would come back again. We know inside the body and if you have got any problem how to look after it. The interesting one was the spray and fertiliser. Yes, it was good because we learn how to control the fertiliser and not put too much and not have to put again. Also the personal training- how to put the protective clothes. Would have worn a hat and gloves, shoes long pants and long sleeved shirt. We don’t wear plastic it’s too hot. We use a different glove now it is thicker. Now when I am doing the spraying I wear a special boot. The gloves are the thicker ones. I can’t remember any health being talked about in the pesticide-training course. I remember about the bites and how you use the bandage.

6. WHAW has also helped organise some outings. Did you go on any of those and if so where did you go and what did you think of the outing?

We’ve been on all of the outings. Harbour Cruise, Hunter Valley, Jenolan Caves, Gosford, Ulladulla, that one wasn’t crash hot. Temple and Kiama, The Entrance, Blue Mountains. Haven’t been to Port Stevens yet. I think that the Three Sisters was the best. That one was good, the Entrance one wasn’t bad. The Entrance one with the Pelican feeding was pretty good too. The chocolate factory was too long sitting in a bus I can fly to China and spend the same time sitting in one place going out to Ulladulla spend all the time looking at the back of the bus.

7. Can you describe how your life has changed over the last four years? Do you have more friends, do you go out more often, and do you feel you can cope with life a bit better now?

Before the project started we didn’t go on outings. We went to Sydney. Before the project we didn’t see them (friends) much. My husband would see them at the market. Some of the ones like Mrs. H and some of the ones locally we would contact by telephone sometimes

Before that we would wear normal clothes, just normal clothes probably cotton we had an idea that you needed to wear protective clothing but not as much as we do now.
ringing them but we would not ring them much. They would not ring us much either they are all busy. Now we meet all you good friends and you help us and we know how to protect ourselves. Yes we met some new growers that we didn’t know before. Um, we don’t contact much but sometimes when we go out on an outing we will contact them but sometimes when we go to Sydney we will see each other. There is this special place in Sydney where we go to send the money to China or to collect the mail then we see each other there. When you are there you have a special invitation card then you put it there and you go and collect them. Every time you go to Sydney you may go up there. It’s a meeting place there as well. We used to go every week to Sydney now we only go when we have business to do in Sydney. Before you used to have to go to Sydney to buy the Chinese groceries but now you don’t have to go there you can buy it here now. You can go down the road for Yum Cha; you have got your Chinese restaurants in the suburbs.

8 If you had to pick out three good things that have happened over the last four years what would they be?

- We know more things than before like before you talk about the council I would have been too scared but now I can do it. Now if we have got problem with the neighbours we can go straight to the council
- Before you couldn’t get anyone to join the committee whereas now you ask and they can join
- Before you were not so confident but now after helping after so many years feel confident to do it.

Before we were just here on the farm less contact with the people but now can organising the outings, I can do it. Now I can get the people there to try and keep the thing going before I think I can’t do this now with you guys to help. Before we just worked on the farm we didn’t go out on outings, now we feel no! there is more to life. Why spend 24 hours on the farm when you can get out and do things see a bit of New South Wales before we didn’t even go to things like Kiama. It just gives us a bit more confidence about things before like organisational skills before I didn’t have them. Before we were too afraid to go and ask before we had to drag people along but now they come and really enjoy.

Woman (3)

1 Going back, before the first meeting that we ever had, even before we started English classes can you describe what life was like for you?

Yes just working yeh, shopping yeh, sometime go to pay the bill. Every time like that and sometime I go out to have Yum Cha dinner with our family, but nothing to do with other people like friends. Even if I had time I go to talk to them no. I didn’t know any people around here I just know where they live. I didn’t know anyone to say hello to. When I left the farm I drove myself. I got the licence when I came to Australia in 1977.
2 Can you remember when you first met anyone from WHAW? Where was that and why did you go to the meeting?

I remember at Llandilo wasn’t it? The first time it was at Llandilo at the hall. There were lots of people there, lots of farmers. Maybe it was Berkshire Park Hall. You invited us and I went.

3 WHAW has helped organise many training courses such as the pesticide-training course, English classes, and computer classes. Have you taken part in any of that training and if so what did you attend?

I went to the computer class and the English class and I went to the leadership course. English, yes English. When you set up the information day then I went there but with these other people there no. The activities you organised I went there but for another community, no, Yes, I went to pesticide training course and also to farm management and Waterwise at Leppington as well. At the Catherine Field I remember that one that was the Field Day. I am sorry I didn’t prepare for today I thought it was next week. I try to remember more.

4 WHAW has also helped organise the outings. Did you go on any of those and if so where did you go and what did you think of the outing?

I went to Manly and to Gosford Agriculture not the other day, before. I didn’t go to Port Stephens because I had been there before. I would love to go on any outings. When asked about what was best – I think for the computer class I was very happy. Because now at this stage, for everything, you need the computer.

5 WHAW has also helped organise information days. Which ones have you attended and can you remember what was discussed at any of them? Response in Q6

6 Did you find any of the information that you have heard over the last four years interesting and why?

I like lots of people, I like meeting lots of people. I like many people to come together. The one day at the Berkshire Park Hall the Chinese (Women’s) Association came and were helping us to do the dance. We had a good time they make us so happy. We met each other very few times, so a couple of ladies there doing the things, reacting there made us laughing and very happy.

7 Can you describe how your life has changed over the last four years? Do you have more friends, do you go out more often, and do you feel you can cope with life a bit better now?

I think very good because that way bring us together and we are close. Now I can ring somebody and somebody to talk. And now if you have got too many things to pick up for market you can say something. I got a new friend who is the flower grower who gave me some flowers the other day. I now know some of the women like W, who I knew was there but we never talked and also L.C. I knew but we didn’t talk. Now we know each other and we can meet in the home. Before we didn’t meet. I like to go out and meet the new friends. Now when someone is working and I pass the farm then I toot toot and wave and say hello. So you make us a lot closer. Very good, yeh, I like it.
I like to bring people together I don’t like it alone. My cousin because I talked with her was amazing because we have lot of activities around and I go to learn the computer and go on outings and go out to the information day and she said ‘I work in the restaurant and I haven’t got anything like that’. We are lucky.

8 If you had to pick out three good things that have happened over the last four years what would they be?

❂ Bring knowledge to us
❂ We can now ask for information before I didn’t know where to ask to get that sort of information.
❂ You bring communication to us now we can talk to the other farmers and ask about the chemicals which one is good and we can spread this information around

Without you are here to help it would be very hard for us to go out to ask especially for the Centrelink. We could go out to ask Centrelink but I don’t want to go out to ask but now I can ask before I wouldn’t go but now can go. Yes now I can ask Centrelink for example my father has got some problem I can ring up and find out.

(B.W organised the moon festival gathering and she did extremely well. We asked her about that. She said she had not always been able to organise things. She tells what she did).

"I got some, what was it – balloons. I took the Karaoke (She took the TV, the music, the mikes, the extensions chords) for everyone to sing. I forgot to ask F.L., to sing a song F.L., can sing. F.L., came and she sat next to you. I know she is a good singer.

I wrote down the words on the coloured paper and had some prizes and asked someone to guess what it means, the word. Had a lot of different prizes. Some movie tickets, some photo frames. I didn’t get any donations or anything - I got them all myself.

I also organised the food as well everyone was asked to bring a plate of food and then everyone there shared, it was very good. I love to be together.

When you organise the things then we learn English, of course we learn it you come we learn it. I think my English has improved. Because we never met these people like you and A. from the TAFE and when we’re trying to talk to you we have to use the English and it improves.

It’s very good after I met with you and talked with you then I talk to my family and tell them what happened. Some of my children live in Lidcombe and when I went down there and talk to them about what had been happening and how I am so happy to talk to them. Just like after the full moon day I went down there to talk to my children and told them what had happened that day and someone been singing and had done some food. Without the activities I would still talk to them about what is happening around because I like to talk to the family, talk to the children, but now more things to talk about.

Just like a couple of days ago when we went to Gosford I talked to the children later I talk to them again and they say Mum you tell us before. Children are very happy for us and they will ask us how is today and what is happening. I very appreciate you helping us this community because now I can see the people outside they don’t have the opportunity to have that sort of activity and I really appreciate it you helping us.
1 Going back, before the first meeting that we ever had, before we started English classes can you describe what life was like for you?

Yeh, it changed a lot you know, before just working, working on the farm. You didn’t know around the information and the woman’s meeting and the Chinese school, For me, I only working on the farm, before I was only working on the farm I have got the friends, but another, same like me. For me it is different because before I got friends I not working on the farm and got the friends, I was working outside in the markets and got friends. When I first went to farm - only knew one or two people, just the family, aunty and uncles and people from China. When working on the farm only met the friends very less. Spend all the times working.

My sister, she came to Australia she just stays on the farm. No friends, she doesn’t know anything about the outside, about the childcare, school, everything.

2 Can you remember when you first met anyone from WHAW. Where was that and why did you go to the meeting?

The first time it was with R.K., and you (VS & NL) were there. It was four years ago when R.K., working in Camden in Catherine Fields talking about the Chinese language school. You came to my house we talked about setting up the school. The daughter was just a baby. Actually thinking about it the first time was the information day at Kemps Creek in the Bowling Club.

3 WHAW has helped organise many training courses such as the pesticide-training course, English classes, and computer classes. Have you taken part in any of that training and if so what did you attend?

Women’s health information at Leppington Public school when women had check up, and at that time W.T. was there. One of the information sessions talked about the Australia, the government, the policies. The information on if you get married, that information. Did pesticide training, N.L., set up one of them first aid course, teach in the emergency working on the farm how you get help with your children how you help them. All of the sessions were good. Very important for the farms, learnt a lot from the leadership course and now women ask me if they can go out to play (have time off the farm) and I feel proud that they think of me as leader.

4 WHAW has also helped organise outings. Did you go on any of those and if so where did you go and what did you think of the outing?

Yes, I remember them I was helping organise them. The Zoo, to Wollongong, Shell Harbour, Port Stephens and the Entrance. Yes I went to the Blue Mountains, oh yes I went to the fish markets, yes, and the children played and they had the prawn the bigger prawns.
5 WHAW has also helped organise information days. Which ones have you attended and can you remember what was discussed at any of them?

We had Centrelink; I went to the leadership training. Oh! Yes, I remember now you are working a lot there are many things.

6 Did you find any of the information that you have heard over the last four years interesting and why?

I am happy that I learnt a lot of things and my knowledge has increased.

In another country only speak a little English but now speak lots. The children are happy too because they can go to playgroup.

7 Can you describe how your life has changed over the last four years? Do you have more friends, do you go out more often, and do you feel you can cope with life a bit better now?

The family now has more things to talk about and we are not struggling with how to sort out the problem. I know how to use the telephone interpreter service and if I need to find out anything I can phone and find out.

Very happy, yeh, very happy to know everything. The first things is everyone is very happy from me and from my family and the knowledge for me and how to use the interpreter and if you have a problem how you contact outside people and I learn a lot of skills. And the children’s have got the Chinese language school and to pick them up we don’t have to go far away before it was far away but now in 5 minutes or ten minutes now you got the school. Before, no when just working, but only one or two friends, but now we have more friends, got a lot of friends now. Yeh, when somebody needs to have information ring up to R.K. My husband says that R.K., is the number one woman. R.K.’s knowledge is high in the area. The women like to go on outings. If there is only working on the farm, feel stressed but then we can get bus and go out and fell less stressed. Before only had one or two friends now have more friends and step by step one by one getting more. I think it makes a difference. When you have friends then you can get more information and find out good things from each other. I have more communication with friends.

8 If you had to pick out three good things that have happened over the last four years what would they be?

I feel like I have become a community leader. They ask me now if they want to go out. I have learnt that there is more to life.

1. Now the women come and ask me if we can go out to play.
2. The women look to me to help them I am like a leader it is good
3. I have got hope now not as before when I only had the farming.
I feel stressed when doing farm, just things, then I say that’s it and I will go out, before when that happened I didn’t know what to do, where to go, now I have hope. Even the children were isolated, now children wanting to go out and ask for school holiday activity, they really want to go. Parenting skills have changed me. I didn’t know what to prepare, never knew that the children needed to go to preschool first, then to go to kindergarten. This was found out at the parenting skills. Also was very good to get the help with citizenship to get for the family. There are over 25 people in the area who have had the course on citizenship and have been able to become citizens.

I have learnt that things best in this area. We are able to tell others about pre school and kindergarten and playschool and it is so important.

Thank you for all the help to have such change in the families and the children. Thank you that we can teach the children not to be isolated, thank you very much.

**Woman (5)**

1 Going back before the first meeting that we ever had, before we started English classes can you describe what life was like for you?

Before I met you then I meet with some other women very simple only working on the farm, simple didn’t know much about the outside. Then after that we met you then got to know you and had an information day and learn lots of things. Through you can ask the government and the service and we learn lots of things.

In the morning when you wake up you go to the farm after that you come back and have breakfast or lunch and after that if I have some money I go to shopping and that’s it.

I know where they come from but never talk but now we talk when we meet together.

I would leave the farm once each week. I went by car I bought a car. Before my husband used a manual car but I didn’t know how to drive, so if I want to go out I have to call a friend to come and pick me up.

I went to the school and learned to drive and I go to get the licence but my husband said no, I cannot have the licence before he got the licence first, then after that you can have the licence because the man doesn’t want the women to have the licence before him.

Yes, I got from 1968 I got my licence. I could only drive an automatic car. When I came here I stayed with my father in law. He was very bad, very bad to the husband, even though husband was the only son. I went to school and talked to the teacher and told her what was happening and she told me to
move out. We then went to live in Granville and lived there. First worked in the restaurant then I did sewing for one year. After we moved from my father in law then my husband went to work for someone else, got a job in the restaurant and was paid $800 per week. I did sewing and we saved $10,000. My friend introduce me and say well at the 12th Avenue I got a farm. The people is move away. The farm is T. H.’s farm. He had signed a 5 year contract but he only used 2.5 years so he moved out so we continued the farming. From that time on till now we doing the farming.

2 Can you remember when you first met anyone from WHAW? Where was that and why did you go to the meeting?

I am not sure I think it was 1997 (WHAW only at the end of 2001). It was here at my house. I bought the farm two years around two years then I meet her (R.K.) She came to talk to me to come to the information day and the English class. I went to the information day at Kemps Creek Bowling club. And I went to the pesticide training at the Bowling Club as well. I also went to the English class in the shed.

3 WHAW have helped organise many training courses such as the pesticide-training course, English classes, and computer classes. Have you taken part in any of that training and if so what did you attend?

I went over 10 times, I can’t remember what they all were. They were in Leppington Hall. I went there many times, and the outings, and I also went to the pesticide training classes and the English classes. I liked it when I went to the bowling club with the women, together. They asked us what problems do you have. How can we helping you. Learnt when I have problems where we can go to get help. We went to Leppington four or five times, all the women together, and talked what sort of problems do you have and how can we helping you. Over a couple of years you have set up the information days lots and lots of times about different things, I cant remember all. I like it when the women can get together, and they ask us not only what do you need help with but also talk about family issues and you know the family problems and we can tell them what the family problems are and another thing is the women together can talk together you know can talk to each other and we are very happy about it. Another thing is the outings, the women love the outings, because all women together and we can talk about any thing. The markets are not good no good the parsley very cheap very cheap. Shallots very cheap!

And another thing is like the women’s health. You bring us to the women’s health check up and that is the thing that is very good for us. And we were talking about it because you have done a lot of things for us.

4 WHAW has also helped organise outings. Did you go on any of those and if so where did you go and what did you think of the outing?

I remember we went to the Newcastle you know the Port Stephens. We went to the Camden the big farm (Maltese) in Camden and we went to the Newcastle. And we went to the Sydney markets. I went to Wollongong. No I haven’t been to the zoo. Yes, I went to Manly. Yes, I went to the Fish Market after that we went to the park.
5 WHAW has also helped organise information days. Which ones have you attended and can you remember what was discussed at any of them?

(Comments relate to government drought relief packages) “I didn’t go to Centrelink because my bank it has got some money there. So it’s too much trouble my husband said the government money, don’t bother to get the money, later on the government will check it so I don’t like to get that sort of money. My family like the brother and the relatives they all love it because you helping them all so they all get the help from Centrelink. I got lots of friends they all applied the money and they all got a little bit”.

6 Did you find any of the information that you have heard over the last four years interesting and why?

I just went to the leadership training a couple of times because at that time I was quite busy because my sons were going to get married but I know that B W learned lots from the course.

7 Can you describe how your life has changed over the last four years? Do you have more friends, do you go out more often, and do you feel you can cope with life a bit better now?

Yes, changed a lot. The information like from Centrelink and the English class and information day and the pesticide training you learn a lot. Why haven’t I got my licence (relates to pesticide use training course) I went to the pesticide training with L.J. and I haven’t got my licence, my husband went to the one with S.W. and he has his licence already. My husband went Monday and I went Tuesday. I went to the training on the 28th or 30th August. If I have problems if they are family problems when I will ring up my son. I brought a new fridge before I went to China. My husband pulled out the plug and when put it back then it smelled like burning. The people said they would collect the old fridge when bringing new fridge but they didn’t take it because they said it was too dirty. The old fridge still here. My son said that the council would take it on Thursday but my husband said I will put it in shed and lock the chemicals in it.

Well the things is I feel great because I went to the training for how to use telephone interpreter and outside the fence because I ring up to the council to sort it out to talk to the council I used interpreter by telephone to helping me. The interpreter not very good didn’t translation all but the things were still done, they knock the tree. And after that the fence, we built up the fence, the people come and the guy very good they helping me just knock the tree inside the fence.

I feel so good because I asked my son and all the children they say ‘I am too busy now and I don’t live here anymore so I can’t do it for you’ so I ring up by myself.

My husband doesn’t care the family things he doesn’t do anything to helping me. I just bring the old fence back go to the back yard and clear it up and block it up, tidy all the things because we go to China and so I had to make it secure you know so people can’t come here. So I take a couple of Thursdays and I carry all the things to the back, tie it up to the tomato stakes. I take a couple of weeks to do it.
I used the telephone interpreter for the next-door neighbours. Because when I build up the dam is near to the fence - 3 metres. The next-door neighbour is filling all the dirt or something next to my property even next to the fence. I ring up to the council to complain to the guy and the interpreter only translation half - didn't finish all but my son after that my son made me ring up to there a couple of times and now the next door I can see them they have moved the things away. When you use the telephone interpreters they just translation half not all of them. The council ring back and say why you didn’t give us the full details but I had given all the details but the interpreter hadn’t translation all of it and I think maybe they just think I they just decide what sort of things should be asked and don’t interpret exactly what is said!

My property higher than the next door that’s right when I built up the dam there was a waterway when the dam is full then there is a way to get out but next door the guy brings I think 500 load, truck of the dirt and put on there and they ask me ‘do you want some’ and they put it outside there and then I said ‘no I don’t need any’ so now they just put it in the property. Now they make the property higher than my one then when the water when the dam full the water nowhere to go so that is very dangerous. I ring up to the council and tell them tell them to stop and that’s when they didn’t translation properly. At the end my son had to call to the council.

8 If you had to pick out three good things that have happened over the last four years what would they be?

1. Able to use the telephone interpreter service

2. Not just me but around lots of women they all tell me they all think of the same thing because now if the women have problems like the body had a problem and they want a check up or some problem in the family or something we have got the way to ask we can asking you to helping us so that is very good.

3. Outings when we have outings I feel very happy and mind is made open wide. Lots of women like to go because we haven’t go out at anytime before. That three things is very good for us, for the ladies.

Yes quite lots of new migrants people here now and when they have problems then they would like someone to help. Just like opposite... they would like someone to help. And the information day is very important for the new migrant because it just like you showing them which way to go. And they understand the things so the people they like it very much.

I can’t remember who is the guy, what is his name in the Agriculture Department. It’s not just like you ask the council because when you use the interpreter by telephone you have to prepare lots of things and put it in the front because they ask you lots of things and sometimes they ask you things you don’t know what is that and so it is not that easy.

I would like to tell you a story-

My next-door neighbour the other side is going to build up childcare. Because they sent us three times the plan to show me then I would like to ask for more information so I ring up to council I want more information but they ask me what is your neighbour what road and I don’t know what road because I know my road Watts road but I don’t that road what is it called. And they ask what is the number and I don’t know what is the number and they ask what is it for and I don’t know either and so they tell me ‘go back and check out properly and ring back later’. I am the
person like that thing is if I don’t know I would like to find out. My husband tells me says ‘oh you just want to doing this to be annoying its got nothing to do with you’. The people built up the house and I can’t say no because they are quite good people. That is why when I read the mail I have to find out what is that. The husband is a developer/planner. They build up the house there and twice a week some people will come to there to the office to do the drawings. When they send the letter they say in two or so weeks if you don’t say something then it means you agree. I don’t know whether it is too late to do anything. I spray at the night time. I don’t mind they can build up anything but later on if they complain then I don’t like that. I have to talk to my husband to see and then she will see. I use the chicken manure fertiliser and that has a strong smell and I also use the chemical spraying and also I use the lime.

(This matter was then discussed in some depth and she was given some strategies she could use).
CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT AND NON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

A brief history of the project development, and the changes that occurred, is provided to assist the reader in understanding the context of the project and its work (Appendix 8).

Over the past four years participating government agencies and other organisations have worked closely together to seek solutions to the many issues confronted by the growers. Some changes in organisations were significant, some, were just small steps.

Three Inter-agency meetings were held over the duration of the project. These were arranged by WHAW, and attended by all key project partners and some departmental senior management. Open and frank discussions, of current issues for the growers in their business, prompted government agencies to seek solutions that were acceptable and effective for the grower community including:

- **NSW DPI**

  Project partners have made frequent representation on behalf of the growers to the NSW Minister and senior management of the department on issues that come under the governance of this department and which impact upon the growers businesses, and lives.

  Over the four years of WHAW involvement in the project, there have been significant changes within this agency and following discussions over the issues of communication between the NSW DPI and CALDB growers, bi-lingual community educators (BCE’s) were trained and employed to work with CALDB grower communities. This strategy has greatly improved communication, understanding and adherence to legislation and improved farming practices.

- **NSW DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION (NSW DEC)**

  At the time of the new legislation relating to commercial pesticide use, many discussions were held between this agency and project partners. The project advocated for the use of BCE’s to work with the NSW DEC to improve communication and understanding between the Chinese growers and the agency. Subsequently a number of BCE’s were trained and employed to work with the NSW DEC.

- **NEW SOUTH WALES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING (NSW DET) AND NSW TAFE OUTREACH**

  Collaboration between NSW DET and NSW TAFE has been most successful for the women in the community. English courses were held in Leppington Primary School and Llandilo. The Principal of Leppington Primary School also facilitated accommodation for the Chinese Community Language School now held weekly (Appendix 3).
Richmond TAFE held both English and computer classes at Llandilo which were well attended, and most sessions were appreciated by both the men and women from the area. Richmond TAFE arranged for home tutors to go to farms and assist the growers on a ‘one to one’ basis, if they were unable to attend the other courses.

More recently, the Acting Principal of Leppington Primary School, made a presentation to NSW DET, highlighting the improved communication between parents of the Chinese community on matters concerning parents and the school. Some of the difficulties experienced by the school, prior to its close involvement with the project, included:

- little involvement with families in school events
- low numbers of children from the Chinese community attending camps
- little information regarding school programs being received by the families
- very few parents attending parent teacher interviews
- school facilities being under utilised by the community.

Since the development of the project partnership the changes that have occurred include:

- many school notices printed in both English and Chinese
- most Chinese children now attend camps and excursions
- a significant increase in parents/teachers attending for interviews
- whole families attend school performances and use the occasion as a social event
- kindergarten enrolments have increased with the introduction of translated forms.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

- Camden Council employed a Chinese bilingual woman for two years to work with the community in the local area
- Camden Council library developed a Chinese book section for residents
- Blacktown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Liverpool and Penrith Councils obtained joint funding to employ an agricultural education officer across the five local government areas.

**CHILDCARE**

- Rossmore Pre-school employed a bilingual teacher to assist with the integration of children into the school and also to assist with integration of the pre-school children into the local primary school.
CENTRELINK

In times of crisis for the grower community such as drought, hail and bush fires, the agency arranged separate meeting times with added interpreter services for the community to discuss relief programs, and to complete documentation as required. Centrelink, also ran information sessions that the growers requested such as parenting payments, getting ready for retirement, changes to work arrangements and their affects on Centrelink payments. Centrelink provided interpreters at every information session they attended.

NEW SOUTH WALES DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES (NSW DOCS)

The rural NSW DOCS financial counselors, who, until the drought in 2002, had not had reason to interact with the market garden grower community were contacted and invited to meet with the growers. A number of growers were known to be experiencing severe hardship, unable to provide much food (over and above that grown on the farm). NSW DOCS made urgent representation to its Federal department on behalf of the growers for relief packages, and over 70 packages of non-perishable ethno-specific food stuffs were distributed by WHAW and Camden Council to the Chinese community.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As with all projects there were a number of factors that worked well and those that failed to work in favour of the project.

WHAT WORKED WELL?

THE MODEL OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.

Basing the project on a community development model implemented through the processes of action research worked well for all participants. While some work had been undertaken with the community through UWS and other government agencies, no agency had worked as intensely as WHAW worked with the women. Project workers recognized the early indicators by the community of their need and willingness to take new steps into areas of knowledge previously unexplored and as the project progressed the women demonstrated a sense of urgency as they sought more and more information on issues affecting their lives.

GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

The value of having a broad representation of agencies and organisations on working groups worked favourably for the project in a number of ways. Funding bodies supported applications that indicated strategic partnerships. Partnerships, particularly between project partners and community members, in this project, prevented duplication in the use of scarce and valuable project resources and facilitated access to the community through an integrated approach.
The ability to ‘value add’ to other organisations’ programs, particularly with the pesticide training with the Chinese community, resulted in the Health Module being a regular segment in the training program.

With the three working groups developed over the Sydney Basin, strategies developed in one area were transferable across some areas, and not others. This meant specific issues were addressed in each area but without duplicating the use of resources.

Key people, representing organisations in the Working Groups, were able to inform higher levels of management and effect quick and effective action on issues of concern for the community.

The initial WHAW project funding was for two years and on review of the progress of the project funding was extended for another two years. This meant that the initial work with the community where the progress seemed so slow, could be completed satisfactorily. It has been extremely valuable being able to build on and complete the preliminary work of the project to obtain the most effective long-term outcomes for the community.

**WHAT DID NOT WORK WELL?**

Changes of personnel can have a very disruptive impact on any project. By their very nature, projects are finite and any personnel changes can mean that time-lines blow out and the community suffers through no fault of its own.

Funding is usually for short-term projects and work with isolated or marginalised communities takes considerable time to get off the ground. Many government and non-government agencies are now expected to work in partnership with other agencies, however they can offer no resources to support the work. Most do not appear to have funding to support even a small goods and services budget. This leads to a vicious cycle. Inadequate project support, leads to less successful outcomes, which can result in less funding being available! It is recommended that realistic time lines are allocated to project management in funding applications and that adequate resources are sought so that outcomes are achievable.

**FINAL COMMENT**

Change in the lives of women, as heard through their stories, is exciting. Change in the community as a whole, is manifest as members meet together, and change within government and non-government agencies is evident throughout this evaluation.

Project outcomes have demonstrated the importance of effective partnerships between communities, and government and non-government bodies in contributing to the considerable sustainable achievements for the market garden community.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The Recommendations from this project focus on three major areas of concern for the CALD market garden community. They are:
1. Occupational Health and Safety
2. Government Agencies - Access and Consultation
3. Responsibility for Ongoing Work with the Community

1 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

❂ That Federal Government enact legislation requiring the labels of products containing pesticides be developed in plain English (or an alternate format e.g.: pictograms)
❂ That the Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) develop a mandatory national co-ordinated approach to the monitoring, and recording of data on adverse events, including acute and chronic exposure of humans to agricultural chemicals
❂ That initial work commenced with Sydney University be expanded to ensure that Occupational Health and Safety issues are addressed in this population so as to ensure the risk of poor long-term health outcomes are reduced

2 GOVERNMENT AGENCIES - ACCESS AND CONSULTATION

❂ That all Government Departments whose charter includes working with farming communities, or working in rural and semi-rural areas with CALDB populations, include market garden communities on small acreage across the Sydney Basin as important constituents in their key strategic directions
❂ That in any future planning the NSW Government takes into account the important contribution, such as availability of fresh fruit and vegetables and the rural amenity, that market garden growers make to the NSW economy when planning urban development in the rural and semi-rural areas of the Sydney Basin.

3 RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONGOING WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY

❂ That CALD market gardeners be a target group for Area Multicultural Health Planning, Primary and Community Health and Population Health units of those Area Health Services (AHS) which are located in the semi-rural areas of the Sydney Basin
❂ That a rural worker be appointed to NSW Health to build on the model developed of project development implemented with the Chinese community. The worker would focus on the broad issues of health for women of other CALDB language groups who work on market gardens in the Sydney Basin. The cultural backgrounds of other grower groups include: Cambodian, Arabic, Vietnamese, Korean, Italian and Maltese background growers.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1

List of Information/Training Sessions developed in partnership during the project

2002

Jan  Focus groups run in Kemps Creek for needs assessment
Mar  New pesticide regulation
Mar – Dec  English classes in shed
May  Information day – Nepean
May – Nov  Pesticide training – over 30 days of training completed
June  Centrelink – drought relief
July  Interagency information day
Sep  Women’s health x 2
     Home security
     Waterwise and TAFE information
Oct  First Aid
     Women’s health
Nov  Fertiliser application
     Skin cancer awareness
Nov  Drought relief
     TAFE information x 2
Dec  Focus groups – women’s health
     Childcare information
     Chinese language school

2003

Weekly English classes throughout the year
January  Drought relief
        National Parks – duck and snake etc control
        Police – personal safety
        Centrelink – drought relief
        NSW Playgroup Association – planning a playgroup
February  Sydney Water – water restrictions x 3
         DoCS – drought relief
         Rural Lands Board – rabbit control
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Events</th>
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| March   | Police – personal security  
           | Centrelink – drought relief  
           | Sydney Water – water restrictions  
           | Sydney Water – water restrictions  
           | Centrelink – drought relief  
           | Department of Education – school readiness and excursion information  
           | Centrelink – drought relief  
           | Record keeping x2  
           | Personal safety x2  
           | Rabbit and duck control  
           | Computer training – weekly Llandillo  |
| May     | Department of Education  
           | Rural Lands Board – rabbit control  
           | National Parks and Wildlife – ducks, spiders and snake info  |
| June    | Women’s health  
           | National Parks and Wildlife  
           | Men and women’s health  
           | Waste management  
           | Council information  |
| July    | Women’s health  |
| August  | Menopause  
           | Tai Chi  |
| September | Back care  
           | Gentle exercise  
           | Centrelink  
           | DoCS  |
| October | Sydney Water  
           | Centrelink  
           | DoCS  |

**2004**

- Computer training weekly for two terms
- English classes weekly during the term for the whole year
- School holiday activities during school holidays for 3 holiday periods
- Chinese language school weekly during school terms whole year
- Playgroup monthly whole year
April | Parenting course run over four consecutive weeks
     | Farmhelp
May  | Telephone interpreter
June | Centrelink
     | Fertiliser application
July | Men and women’s health
     | Sydney Water
August | Pesticide training x2
Sept/Oct | Leadership training
         | Pesticide training x2
         | Centrelink – Farmhelp
November | Women’s health
         | DoCS – drought relief
December | Parenting course

2005

English classes running weekly
Playgroup running monthly
Chinese language school running weekly
School holiday activities run during school holidays
February | Parent/child relationships
          | Rural Lands Board – rabbit control
          | First Aid
May | Planning – needs assessment
July | Centrelink – parenting and retirement benefits
     | Cambodian needs assessment
     | Workcover – nitrate legislation
Aug – Nov | University student project supervision
Aug | Centrelink – parenting and retirement
     | NMA – information
     | Men’s and women’s health
Aug – Sep | DIPNR – information on Metro Plan
October | Men and women’s health
APPENDIX 2

Leppington Chinese Panda Playgroup

2005

Author:
Nerilyn Lee
Senior Project Officer
Women’s Health at Work
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project workers wish to acknowledge the courage and determination of the Cantonese speaking women who, even though they work a 12 – 16 hour day, were prepared to work with the project team to set up the playgroup which would ultimately benefit their children and their community.

Thank you also to all participating organisations for their support and willingness to persevere along an un-charted road. These included:

❖ Camden Council
❖ Camden Area Resource Centre and the Jumbunna Toy Library
❖ Mission Australia - Rossmore Pre-School
❖ Playgroup NSW
❖ SWS Community Health Nurses
BACKGROUND

‘Women’s Health at Work’ (WHAW) is a New South Wales State-wide Health Program managed by the Sydney West Area Health Service Diversity Health Institute (SWAHS DHI).

The Program commenced working with women from Cantonese speaking backgrounds who work on the market gardens in 2001. The Program has made significant contributions to successful project outcomes in partnership with many other participating organisations on the project known as “The Market Garden Project – developed in collaboration with market gardeners of Chinese speaking Backgrounds Across the Sydney Basin”.

The main focus of the work for WHAW was to work with women to improve their health outcomes. It is well known that people who have control over their health and workplaces have better health outcomes than those who have little control over these aspects of their lives.

There are many farms in the Leppington, Rossmore and Catherine Field areas that are worked by young married families of Cantonese speaking backgrounds with ‘pre-school aged’ children. It became apparent early on in the project that one of the major concerns of women on the farms was that their young children had to play by themselves for long periods of time. Both parents had to work and therefore the children were left to amuse themselves. This not only caused the parents great distress but they also recognised that the children had not developed sufficient social and language skills to adapt to the changes in their lives when they commenced school.

INTRODUCTION

While speaking with the women, project workers discovered that the majority of mothers had little understanding of the importance of parent and child interaction through play and the contribution it makes to a child’s learning and development. To obtain a better understanding of the parent’s desires for their children, project workers held focus groups with the women to discuss these issues and seek possible solutions that were acceptable and realistic to implement with them.

A group of the mothers agreed to work with WHAW, Camden Council, Mission Australia’s Rossmore Pre-school and Camden Area Resource Centre Jumbunna Toy Library (CARC) to form a playgroup that would meet monthly. The mothers were not familiar with the details of setting up playgroups including the details of government requirements for insurance, forming a working party to ensure the functioning of the group including structuring the sessions, setting up and putting away the toys and equipment and provision and preparation for morning teas.

A group of mothers and project workers met with Playgroup NSW that informed the women of the requirements and details for developing and running a playgroup. Following this meeting the women were keen to start a group as soon as possible. Playgroup NSW
informed the women that a playgroup was already being held in the Leppington Progress Association Hall (this was attended mainly by local English speaking families). The hall and facilities seemed to also meet the needs of the Cantonese speaking group. However, for a number of reasons it was decided by the Chinese women that they wanted their own group. One reason for not wanting to join the existing playgroup was that their children did not have much opportunity for interaction with western people and were frightened by them. Additionally the women were only able to spare sufficient time away from their work on the farm to have the playgroup monthly, where as the English speaking group met bi-monthly. Also and very importantly, the mothers themselves wanted to socialize with each other and this playgroup meeting would provide that forum. The mothers would also be learning about new ideas on child development themselves, and stated that they did not want others watching the process.

Rossmore Pre-school applied for and was successful in gaining a grant to purchase some toys for the playgroup. The proprietors of the hall were contacted to finalise the day that most suited the group - it had to be a day that was not followed by a market day as the women would be too busy picking and packing vegetables to attend the group.

One of the major barriers in developing the playgroup was the lack of transport for the women. Public transport is sporadic and does not cater for residents on the isolated rural farms. Only one woman had her driver’s licence and was confident enough to drive herself and her child to the playgroup sessions. Another woman had just obtained her licence but was not at all confident in taking her child to the hall. None of the other women had a driver’s licence.

It was agreed that Camden Council would purchase baby seats and that WHAW would transport the women and children to the playgroup.

**PROCESS**

Information flyers were sent to the young families in the area and personal trips were made to the farms by project workers to speak with the women and encourage them to attend. It was agreed that the first Tuesday of the month from 11am until 1:30 pm was going to be the best times for the women to leave the farms with their children.

Those who required transport were asked to inform project workers so as they could be collected. They were also to be returned to their farms at the end of each playgroup session. In the early days of the playgroup this process took a great deal of time. Each home had to be visited separately in order that all the children could be accommodated in the car in the correct child restraints.

Not long after commencing the group CARC in partnership with Camden Council developed a successful submission to obtain a community bus and toy library and subsequently the time consuming task of transporting the women and children became a lot easier. The bus carried up to 5 children in the correct restraints as well as their mothers so two or three families could be transported at one time.
OUTCOMES

The playgroup has now been meeting for two years on a regular basis. The numbers of children attending each session at the beginning of last year (2004) varied between 10 and 14. When the Chinese community worker from Camden Council left the project partnership the numbers fell to around 7 and there was some concern regarding the reason for the drop off in numbers. Flyers were delivered to each of the houses where families with young children were known to live, however that did not have any real effect. It was considered by the project partnership that one of the reasons for the drop off in the numbers was that the mothers were having difficulty in understanding the English that was spoken to instruct and assist both them and the children during the course of each session.

At the same time Playgroup NSW was negotiating to have a Cantonese speaking trained childcare worker come to conduct the playgroup on a regular basis. It was successful in the negotiations and Karitane (based in Liverpool) agreed to fund the position from NSW Families First funding.

The bi-lingual worker now co-ordinates the Panda Playgroup at Leppington on a monthly basis. This has proved to be a most effective strategy. The women and children who had not been attending the playgroup have returned and the playgroup coordinator has been invaluable in liaising with the women and the children. She has been able to instruct the mothers on how to do such things as make play dough for their children.

Each session has a different emphasis that the children and the mothers are enjoying. For instance, the mothers were able to tell the coordinator of their concerns over some of their children’s health issues and project workers were able to have a child care nurse come and speak with the women individually about their concerns. The mothers found this to be very beneficial.

The change in the interaction between the mothers and their children has been enormous. The mothers speak with their children when they are playing and no longer consider that play is just something that their children do in isolation. Through the stories and songs the mothers and children are also learning English together.

In addition and perhaps just as importantly, the mothers are enjoying the opportunity for ‘legitimate’ social interaction – an activity that doesn’t happen very often as it is anticipated that any ‘spare time’ available should be spent working!

The Panda Playgroup has been a successful partnership project with Camden Council, CARC and the Jumbunna Toy Library, WHAW, Rossmore Pre-school and Playgroup NSW. It is becoming evident that this playgroup is assisting the women and children in the Leppington, Rossmore and Catherine Field areas to reach their true potential as they take that next step in their development into full time education.
HIGHLIGHTS

At the end of 2004 a Christmas party was held with over 40 children and their parents attending. The children loved to see Father Christmas. One grandmother who had never seen a Father Christmas “up close” sat on his knee and had her picture taken. It was the highlight of the day for the grandmother.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project workers wish to acknowledge the courage and determination of the Cantonese speaking women who, even though they work a 12 – 16 hour day, were prepared to work with the project team to set up the Chinese language school which would ultimately benefit their children and their community.

Thank you also to all participating organisations for their support and willingness to persevere along an un-charted road. These included:

- Camden Council
- Leppington Primary School Principal and staff
- Department of Education and Training Community Language College
- Chinese Community Development Worker
BACKGROUND

The New South Wales State-wide Health Program ‘Women’s Health at Work’ (WHAW) is managed by the Sydney West Area Health Service Diversity Health Institute (SWAHS DHI). The Program commenced working with women from Cantonese speaking backgrounds who work on the market gardens in 2001. The Program has made significant contributions to successful project outcomes in partnership with many other participating organisations on the project known as “The Market Garden Project – developed in collaboration with market gardeners of Chinese speaking Backgrounds across the Sydney Basin”.

There are over 200 market gardens farmed by people from Cantonese speaking backgrounds in the Liverpool, Camden local government areas of the New South Wales Sydney Basin. Many of the market garden families have young children who attend local schools. The children speak Cantonese at home, which is the language their parents speak, and learn English at school. None of the children can write in Chinese and none of them speak Mandarin. Mandarin is the official language of China and although the parents do not speak Mandarin they felt that it would benefit their children’s future if they could learn the official language of China (Mandarin).

A Chinese language school operates in Liverpool but for many of the growers to take their children to this school meant that they had to leave the farm for at least half a day. The school was at least a 40-minute drive and it was easier to stay for the duration of the class time rather than drive back and forwards again to collect their children. None of them could afford to leave their work for this length of time on a regular basis so the children were unable to attend the school. However the desire of the parents to have their children learn the home language of China continued to be an issue for the women.

Knowing this concern, WHAW and the Camden Council Chinese Community Worker visited two local schools in the area and asked the school principals if they would be willing to have a language school held in their school on Sundays during the school term. Both schools were willing but one of the schools had more convenient facilities.
INTRODUCTION

In December of 2002 a group of Chinese women met with WHAW and the Camden Council Chinese Community Worker to form an Association that would run a Chinese Language school for the children in the local Camden area.

None of the women had ever been members of an Association. They had no knowledge of constitutions, minutes of meetings, agendas or any of the other trappings of inaugurating and running an Association. They were however keen to learn and do whatever it needed for their children to have the language school close to where they lived.

At the first meeting they agreed that the aims of the Association that they were setting up would be to:

- ‘Initiate and then ensure smooth running of the Mandarin Language School for Children in the areas surrounding Leppington Public School.
- Ensure that the children of the area have an understanding of the language and culture of their parents to maintain links with their rich heritage from China’.

The reasons for starting the school were:

- To ensure that the children can read and write the language of the country of their parents birth
- To increase the knowledge in the rich culture of the Chinese people
- To ensure that, in this day of the world being a ‘global village’ that children are able to speak more than one language and have an understanding of other cultural values
- To increase cohesion within families and to maintain a means of dialogue between family members when English is not the first language of the parents
- There is no school in the local area that currently teaches Mandarin

The values, knowledge and skills that the committee wanted the children to gain were:

- To be able to read and write Chinese script and be able to speak Mandarin. (Even though many of the parents speak Cantonese it was agreed that because the official language of China is now Mandarin this was the language that should be taught so that the children would have dialogue with people from China in the future.)
- To be able to have some understanding of the culture of their parents, what the belief systems of their parents were and where these had come from
- To be able to have a common language that would be able to be used across the different ages within each family unit (grandparents, parents and children)
- To learn that there is immense value in different cultures. To be proud of the heritage of their Chinese background.
Process

Following that initial meeting the women then met again at the beginning of the next year. They went through the process of having the Association incorporated and obtaining an Australian Business Number. They also opened an account where the fees paid by the families could be kept.

A Chinese woman who had been teaching at another language school was approached to take on the headship of the Leppington Chinese Language School. Visits were made to the Chinese Embassy to obtain up to date information regarding books being used and accepted by the Chinese education system.

Teaching resources such as wall charts, books to write in as well as the language books were purchased. Information flyers were sent to the parents in the Camden and Liverpool areas informing the parents that the school would be commencing in the third term of the year.

Initial response to the school was overwhelming. There were over 70 children registered. There was also a wide range of ages in the children who attended the school. Two other teachers were found to teach this large number of children.

It was decided that the children would initially be divided into age groups but as differing abilities in language acquisition appeared the classes would then be divided by abilities into a beginner, an intermediate and an advanced class.

The school has been running very well over the past two years. There was some concern that the teaching was too didactic and the children found it hard to respond to a different way of learning than they experienced on a daily basis in the Australian state education system. The teachers had come from China and were teaching in the way that they had been taught not realizing how different the system is in Australia. Meetings have been held with the teachers to rectify this. Assistance is available to change teaching styles and curriculum from staff of the NSW Department of Education Community Languages College and the teachers have met to discuss some of these issues with Department advisors.

The parents have been happy with the results of their children’s attendance at the school, although there were some children who did not return after
the initial year. This may have been because the fees are quite expensive and if the family has three or four children attending the school this can be a burden to some, especially in times of drought and poor returns on farming that have been experienced by growers in the area.

At the end of 2004 parents were delighted with a concert that the children put on for them which displayed the extent of the language they had learnt in a visual and audible way. The looks on the children’s faces as they "performed" for their parents were also a delight to see.

At the end of the first term of 2005 it was decided to introduce a painting and drawing class to the school. This was to take place after the Mandarin classes had ended this has also proved to be a great success with the children completing beautiful work. (See previous page).

As the highlight of this year the children were taken by bus to see the Chinese temple in Surrey Hills. Here they were able not only to see the Temple and learn more of their culture and heritage but the visit of the children brought great delight to many of the older Chinese who live in the Temple grounds. The children chatted happily to the older residents who were amazed that they had not visited the temple before. It was a very memorable day for all concerned.

The Chinese language school is in the process of updating its curriculum to bring it into line with the other community language schools and this will also mean that the school will be able to receive funding from the Department of Education.

The parents have regular meetings with the teaching staff and enjoy having input into the language school. The children are enjoying learning another language and being able to communicate in another language. The parents are determined that the school will continue to run over the next years.

It is hoped that English-speaking children from the surrounding school will also attend to learn Mandarin. Flyers and letters of invitation have been sent to the principals of schools in the area to invite the children to come to an open day and experience the excitement of learning another language and learning about a very different culture.
APPENDIX 4

Women’s Health at Work Program
Chinese Market Garden Project
Health Component to Pesticide Training

Author:
Nerilyn Lee
Senior Project Officer
Women’s Health at Work
Sydney West Area Health Service
HEALTH COMPONENT TO THE PESTICIDE TRAINING PACKAGE

INTRODUCTION

WHY WAS THE HEALTH COMPONENT WRITTEN

This health component was written as an adjunct to the pesticide-training package as a result of work done by Dr. Frances Parker (Parker 2000). Dr. Parker in her work with market gardeners in the Sydney basin noticed that across the Sydney Basin many of the market gardeners had come from countries where English was not the first language. The information on the use of chemicals in Australia is in English. Many of the CALDB growers did not speak English and so obtained the application information and any safety information they need either from other farmers, or from the distributors they trusted and who spoke their language.

Many of the growers she spoke to while undertaking her research titled "Developing an understanding of the occupational health and safety practices of Market Gardeners and cut flower growers of non English speaking background in the Sydney Basin", had experienced some reaction during or after spraying pesticides. These reactions ranged from rashes, to stomach problems through to respiratory distress (Parker Sept 2000).

Recent government legislation has made it mandatory for all users of pesticides on a commercial basis being required to undertake an accredited pesticide-use training course. Up to that point there had been no health component in any course previously used. This was of some concern to many of the government and non-government agencies that worked with the growers in the Sydney Basin. As a result, this training package was developed for use in pesticide-training courses.

THE FARMING COMMUNITY

It is estimated that 8,000 persons of CALDB are directly employed in the horticultural industry in the Sydney Basin. The community is a group of people who are marginalised and isolated by the lack of public transport, lack of community infrastructure and long working hours. They are at risk of incurring occupational health injuries as well as poor mental health. The lack of English language skills and "health language" competency results in them having little control over their health outcomes. Most of the farms operate as single family businesses with the whole family, including the wife and occasionally children, working. In most small family businesses the head of the business, (in this instance usually a male partner), rarely considers family workers to be eligible for paid sick leave (Strong, Lee 2005).

"It is estimated that more than 80% of market gardens in the Sydney Basin are operated by members of ethnic communities. Many have escaped war, civil unrest, invasion and poverty in their home countries. Italians and Maltese arrived after the Second World War, while Lebanese, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Koreans and more recently Iraqis, have arrived following
Chinese immigrants arrived in Australia firstly as traders prior to European settlement and then from the 1780’s as indentured labourers, convicts and free settlers. However their numbers did not become significant until the gold rush era of the 1850’s in Victoria and the 1860’s in New South Wales, when there were estimated to be 50,000 Chinese living here – (Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation 2003). The Chinese commenced market gardening as the gold mining became less profitable from the 1870’s. By the early 1900’s approximately one third of all Chinese in Australia were working in market gardens.

The majority of the Chinese farmers live and work in the Liverpool, Camden and Leppington areas with another large group at Llandillo in the Penrith LGA and a more established group in the Hills district, in the northwest of Sydney.

WHY INCLUDE THE HEALTH COMPONENT IN THE TRAINING PACKAGE

The goal of including the Health Component into the training package was to prevent illness and even death from misuse of chemicals by informing those who used pesticides of the harms associated with their use not only to themselves but also to their families and the environment. Gaining this knowledge also allowed users of the pesticides to make more informed choices about looking after their own health and the health of the broader community.

Including a Health Component linked well with the Ottawa Charter and its principles:

- Build healthy public policy
- Create supportive environments
- Strengthen community action
- Develop personal skills
- Reorient health services

BUILDING HEALTHY PUBLIC POLICY

Policy development of pesticide training for all commercial pesticide users instigated activity towards healthy public policy not only for the environment of the Sydney Basin but also for neighbours and those who work or live near horticultural industries the Sydney Basin.

CREATE SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

From the early 1980’s health had been viewed from an ecological perspective (Heart Health Manual). It had been understood for some time that getting people to make changes was easier when the environment around that change was supportive. With the pesticide training growers gained an understanding of how chemicals interacted not only with the pests and diseases that the growers were trying to eradicate from their produce but also how those pesticides affected the environment and their own families. They were more likely to make
efforts to change their practices if the training was in their own language and on the farms where they could participate in ‘hands on’ experiential demonstrations.

**STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ACTION**

"People generally like doing things which improves their own health and well being" (Heart Health Manual). Enabling people to make their own decisions and supporting individuals and communities to undertake activities towards their own health outcomes will achieve best results. Supporting the community to form self help groups and action groups will continue to improve their own health and also be part of continuing decision-making processes.

**DEVELOPING PERSONAL SKILLS**

As people’s personal skills are developed they are able to increase their knowledge and skill base and change attitudes to improve health outcomes. The training package including the health component was designed purposefully to develop the growers skills not only in the correct use of pesticides for the crops but it also took into account the health and safety issues around their use.

**WHO WAS THE HEALTH COMPONENT WRITTEN FOR?**

The Health Component was written so that a person who had little knowledge of health gained simple background information of the body and body systems. It was written in plain English so that ‘body interconnectedness’ could be easily explained to course participants. (Please see the additional reading listed at the end of this report for those who require further information).
USING THIS MANUAL

This manual has been written to provide some background information for non-health related trainers to be able to present a health component in the "Safe Use of Pesticide" training. It is not meant to be used as a definitive resource on either health or the effects of pesticides on health.

WHAT CHEMICALS ARE CURRENTLY USED

List of Pesticides commonly used on market gardens by the Chinese community

Herbicides
- Dual Gold
- Gramoxone 250
- Roundup
- Paraquat

Fungicides
- Afugan
- Mancozeb
- Rovral
- Bravo

Insecticides
- Permethrin
- Supracide 400
- Thiodan EC  (Crowther, Fonti Quayle 2005)
THE BODY, HOW AND WHY IT WORKS

The body is divided into different systems all interconnected and dependent on each other.

The Cardiovascular System

The Cardiovascular System consists of the heart and blood vessels. The heart is a muscular bag which pumps blood through blood vessels (or tubes) to all the parts of the body. (The heart and blood vessel are really like the engine and petrol pipes in a car.) Blood carries oxygen and food to all the cells in the body, which require them for their work. Blood also carries all the carbon dioxide, oxygen and things that are left over after the cells have finished their work out of the body through the liver, kidneys and lungs.

The work of the heart and blood vessels are a complicated system but one of the important systems in the body.

If poisons are taken into the blood system the first affects of the chemical on the body might be an increase in pulse or higher heart rate. There may be an increase in blood pressure although the person who is affected might not be aware of this. The pipes or blood vessels may shut down from the effect of the chemical and then the patient might feel the effects of shock, such as increased heart rate, increased breathing rate, feeling of faintness, perspiring, nausea and vomiting. If the chemical is taken by the blood to the head then the person feels dizzy, or might have a headache or changes to their vision. Blood circulates around the body quickly and the symptoms of the poisoning will depend on which system the chemical is affecting.
The Respiratory or Breathing System

This system consists of the nose, the mouth, the trachea, bronchus and the lungs. Put simply it consists of the lungs and the pipes that take the air from outside of our bodies to the lungs inside the body. Oxygen is found in the air that is breathed and when the air gets to the lungs oxygen is removed from the air and transferred to the blood. The blood with oxygen in it is taken to the heart and then from the heart transported to all the cells in the body by the blood vessels. Similarly, carbon dioxide and oxygen are taken out from the blood when it returns to the lungs and then breathed back out into the air.

Chemicals are easily transported in air. If poisons are breathed into the body the symptoms might range from a nose that begins to run, to a cough, or there might be some difficulty in breathing. It might bring on an asthma attack or a nosebleed. There might not be any symptoms at the time that the harmful chemical is breathed in but years later cancers might be found in the lungs or one of the pipes that leads to the lungs.
The Digestive System

The digestive system is where the food that is eaten gets broken down so that the blood vessels can take it in a form that can be carried to all the cells for them to work. Food is broken down into sugars and fats and taken in the blood to be used as energy or stored as fat for another time when it might be needed.

Again there are many pipes and tubes that have special names but there is no need to know the names of all of them. There needs to be an understanding that all of the systems are interconnected and what is taken into the mouth can affect breathing or the digestive or urinary systems or other systems within the body.

If the poison or harmful chemicals affect the digestive system then there might be a feeling of nausea or there might actually be vomiting. If the chemical affects lower down in the digestive tract then there might be blood in the faeces or diarrhoea. Again there might be no changes at the time of the poisoning but years later cancers of the stomach, the colon or other parts of the digestive system might occur.
The Neurological system or the Brain and Nervous system

This system is the one that controls the nerves and reactions that the body has. It includes the brain and the spinal cord and all the nerves that travel across the body. Messages are travelling all the time from the eyes, the ears, the fingers and toes. Messages are also going from the lungs and heart to the brain and nerves, which keep the person breathing or the heart beating even though the person may be unaware of all the activity that is going on. Nerve messages allow the body to know if it is hot or cold, in danger, if there is a cut or abrasion and all the other things that are felt. It is a very important system.

When poisons enter this system then the person may feel dizzy, or light headed or they might get a headache. There may be spots that pass in front of the eyes that are not usual or there may be a loss of hearing or taste. There may be tingling in the fingers or toes or the person may feel faint.
The Urinary System

The urinary system consists of two kidneys with pipes going to the bladder and then tubes which take the urine out of the body which are different lengths depending on whether the person is male or female.

Because the blood is traveling to the kidneys all the time and the waste matter is being excreted through the kidneys and the bladder the effects of poisoning may be felt in this system even though there is no direct link between spraying of chemicals and the urinary system.

If the urinary system is poisoned then the amount of urine that is passed may be decreased and it might be painful to pass. Stones may develop in the kidneys, which can get stuck in the tubes and are extremely painful. There might also be blood in the urine. Lastly cancers can appear in either the kidneys or the bladder.

The kidneys are an important part of blood pressure control so chemicals which affect the kidneys can cause changes in blood pressure.
The Skeletal System

This system is made up of bones, cartilage and tendons that provide the support that the body needs so that the person can stand up and move around effectively.

If this system is not looked after then the person may get back aches or joint pains in the legs and arms. As the red cells get manufactured in the long bones if poisoning to this system occurs then the person may get cancer of the bones or leukaemia.

All of the major systems have been covered with muscle and fat and the outside of the body is covered by skin. When the skeleton is covered with skin and fat and muscle then the body looks completely different.

The most important thing to remember is that all of the body is interconnected. When something is done to one part of the body even though the effects might not be seen immediately it can have an affect on another part of the body which will then produce symptoms, sometimes years later.

The immediate symptoms are from acute poisoning. The symptoms that occur later and for longer periods of time are from chronic poisoning.
WAYS OF TAKING POISONS INTO THE BODY

Poisons or chemicals can be taken into the body in 4 different ways.

Absorption
The skin is good protection, but chemicals can be absorbed through the skin in the same way that oils and hand creams get absorbed. Where skin is the thinnest the absorption rates will be the highest. It is very important to know that the forehead the ears and the scrotal area absorb chemicals more quickly than the arms and legs. A hand that has chemicals on it which is then used then to wipe a brow can transfer chemicals to an area that has a fairly high absorption rate.

Remember also the importance of washing clothes that have been used for chemical application separately from other clothes. Chemicals can spread to clothes whilst washing. Underpants could then be put on that have chemicals in them and the scrotal area has a very high absorption rate!

Inhalation - this is where the poison is breathed in. Remember though that the poison may not only affect the parts of the body that make up the respiratory system. Because of the way the body works even though the poison goes into the lungs from there is quickly goes through the blood vessels into the heart and then to the whole body. So breathing in poisons may have symptoms of runny or bleeding nose, coughing, asthma or sneezing but it may have symptoms of dizziness if the poison has affected the brain or the blood vessels. There may be symptoms of gut pain if it has affected the digestive system or it may have blood in the urine if it has affected the urinary system.

Ingestion - this is when poisons are taken into the mouth and swallowed. This mainly happens with children when they find a bottle of something and drink it by mistake. But poisons can also be taken into the mouth and then into the digestive system on cigarette ends if people are smoking while they are mixing chemicals or get chemicals on their hands and then light up a cigarette when spraying. Symptoms of poisoning can be anything from vomiting, to coughing, blood coming up from bleeding at the back of the throat, tightening and swelling of the organs at the back of the throat and an inability to breath. They can also be from the poisoning affecting the lower bowel when the person will get diarrhoea or bloody faeces.

Injection - This usually happens by mistake if needles and syringes are being used for animals. It is important to remember that the skin when it is broken in a cut or scratch absorbs chemicals or poisons the same way that the body would if the poison was to be injected them under the skin.
FIRST AID

Whenever there is an Emergency

follow these steps

Make sure that there is no danger to you or anyone else
Call 000 for help
Check response
Check breathing
Clear airway...if no breathing commence pulmonary resuscitation
Check pulse...if no pulse commence cardio-pulmonary resuscitation

BLEEDING
✶ Sit the person down
✶ Apply pressure to the bleeding point keep pressed down until bleeding stops
✶ Apply bandage and get person to hospital

Knife or other sharp object in person
✶ Do not remove object
✶ Apply pressure to area not sharp object
✶ Apply dressing around sharp object
✶ Get person to hospital

NOSE BLEED
✶ Get person to pinch top of nose tightly
✶ Lean person forward
✶ If bleeding persists get person to hospital

Finger or toe cut off
✶ Sit patient down
✶ Apply pressure to area until bleeding stops
✶ Apply dressing with firm bandage
✶ Get finger or toe and put in plastic bag with ice
✶ Take patient and digit to hospital
BROKEN BONES
- Make the person comfortable supporting the broken limb
- Call for help
- If help long time coming splint the limb bandaging below and above the break

SPINAL INJURY
If unconscious then maintain airway as priority
- If need to move make sure that head and neck are supported on either side and person is rolled in one movement so no twisting occurs
- Support patient in position and call for help
If conscious keep patient still and support head and neck with hands on both sides
- Call for help

HEART ATTACK/STROKE
- Put person into comfortable position.
- Advise person to take any heart medication they may have
- Call for help immediately

BITES
Spider/snake bites
- Reassure the person and make them comfortable
- Apply pressure bandage below and above the bite
- Call for help

Bee sting
- Reassure the person
- Remove the sting with a flat edge
- Apply cold compress
- Make sure that there is no allergic reaction
- If large amount of swelling – get person to hospital

EYE INJURIES
If loose foreign body in the eye.
- Sit patient down put head back leaning to one side
- Gently open eyelids
- Wash out with clean water or sterile saline solution
- If pain intense and there is difficulty opening eye
- Sit or lie patient down
- Cover both eyes with pads
- Call for help
SPRAINS OR STRAINS
✶ Make patient comfortable, elevate the area
✷ Put ice compress on the area for 20 minutes
✷ Take off for two hours
✷ Put firm bandage around area
✷ Get patient to see own doctor to make sure not fracture

BURNS
Fire
✶ Put out flames by rolling patient on the ground in a blanket or large cloth
✷ Put the affected area under cold running water for 10 minutes
✷ Remove and clothes or jewelry that might retain heat
✷ Keep cool and elevated
✷ Call for help
Chemical burns
✶ Wash under running water for at least 15 minutes
✷ Remove any contaminated clothing
✷ Call for help
✷ Identify the chemical for the ambulance or hospital

ABDOMINAL INJURIES
✶ Put patient into comfortable position, usually with legs drawn up
✷ If abdominal contents exposed cover with cool damp cloth
✷ Call for help
✷ Make sure patient does not urinate nor take anything to drink

DROWNING/NEAR DROWNING
✶ Remove person from water
✷ Clear airway
✷ Check breathing, if no breathing commence pulmonary resuscitation
✷ Check pulse, if no heart beat commence cardiopulmonary resuscitation
FIRST AID KIT

All farms should have a first aid kit, which contains the following:

- Adhesive plastic dressing strips, sterile packets of 50: 1 x $3.20
- Bags, plastic, for amputated parts:
  - Small: 1 x $0.10
  - Medium: 1 x $0.10
- Gauze bandages 5cm: 1 x $2.55
- Gloves disposable single: 2 x $1.00
- Safety pins, packets: 1 x $1.50
- Triangular bandages minimum 90 cms: 1 x $4.25
- Wound dressings sterile non-medicated large: 1 x $3.60
- First Aid pamphlet as approved by Workcover: 1 x $2.00

**TOTAL** $20.30

First Aid kits are available from Post offices for approximately $20.00.

Additional reading:

- Material safety data sheets on all of the chemicals used by growers
- National Heart Foundation Heart Health Resource Manual eds. Sheila Walker, John Shaw, Jan Ritchie
- St Johns Ambulance First Aid Training Manual

References


Walker, S, Shaw, J, Ritchie J. (eds.) 1989  *Heart Health Resource manual National Heart Foundation of Australia (NSW Division).*
Executive Summary and Recommendations from Musculoskeletal Pain and Injury Experienced by Chinese Women Working on Market Gardens - University of Sydney - Final Year Students - School of Occupational and Leisure Sciences 2005.

This report is a summation of the project 'Musculoskeletal Pain and Injury Experienced by Chinese Women Working on Market Gardens', undertaken by fourth year occupational therapy students of the University of Sydney. The need for this project was recognised by the Women's Health at Work Program (WHAW), which has been significantly involved in the Chinese Market Garden Project over the past four years.

The results of the research indicate that the work practices and work environment of the Chinese women working on market gardens significantly contributes to their experience of musculoskeletal pain and injury.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to explain the process of the project, identify the key issues impacting on the women and present final recommendations as identified through collaboration with the women and consultation with professionals.

Scope

This project was conducted over an eight-week period in August-September 2005. It involved a specifically selected sample of seven women who currently work on market gardens across the Sydney Basin. The age and years of experience of the women working in market gardens varies greatly and this allowed for hypotheses to be drawn while examining the long-term effects of market gardening on the musculoskeletal system.

Project Aims

1. Assess the work environment and practices of the women working in market gardens.
2. Identify major issues impacting the OH&S of the women working in market gardens.
3. Investigate possible interventions and strategies that relate to these issues.
Methods

This report discusses the development and implementation of the project, the steps involved in identifying the key issues impacting on the women, and final recommendations.

The project was structured to incorporate the steps of initial interviews, pain data collection, workplace assessment and data analysis in order to assess the relationship between market gardening work and musculoskeletal pain. The workplace assessment was comprised of hazard identification, task analysis and risk assessments. These are detailed in the Workplace Assessment Report (Crowther, Fonti, & Quayle, 2005). The subsequent steps of researching recommendations, collaborating with the women, and consulting with health professionals informed the final recommendations.

Work environment and practices

All workers live on the farm with their immediate family and other family members occasionally assist husband and wife teams in their work on the farms. On average, the farms are approximately five acres in size and are comprised of 60-100 garden beds. Work tasks are performed outside on the land, predominantly during daylight hours and inside the shed area after sunset. Due to their work requirements the workers are continuously exposed to natural elements.

Investigation and analysis of work practices revealed a number of physical demands common across tasks that are frequently performed as well as repetitive and/or sustained postures and movements.

Some of the key physical demands are:

- Shoulder flexion and abduction,
- Gripping and grabbing,
- Neck flexion, and
- Squatting (with or without a stool).

Examples of repetitive and/or sustained postures and movements include:

- Reaching forward,
- Sustained squatting, and
- Bending at hips/lower back.
Musculoskeletal issues

Of the seven women in this study, six women reported pain and fatigue in different areas of their bodies. Figure 2 shows the number of areas in which each woman reported experiencing pain and tiredness. The predominant areas of pain reported by the women were lower back, knees, neck, shoulders, hips/thighs, and wrists.

Key Issues

The key issues identified within this report as contributing factors to musculoskeletal pain and injury are shown in the following chart:

- WORK PRACTICES
  - Long work hours
  - Repetitive work

- INDIVIDUAL
  - Biomechanical
  - Repetitive/sustained work postures
  - Poor manual handling

- EQUIPMENT
  - Ergonomics

- FATIGUE
  - Cognitive
  - Limited training
Recommendations

The two priority areas of pain management and prevention of musculoskeletal pain and injury were established for the project.

The final recommendations are divided into engineering controls, behavioural modifications and personal protective equipment and pain management. All these, except pain management, are preventative strategies for experienced and new market garden workers aimed at slowing the onset of musculoskeletal pain, reducing the severity of pain and controlling the risks associated with market gardening work.

1. ENGINEERING CONTROLS

These include modifications to existing equipment to improve ergonomics and the use of ergonomically designed equipment (stool and hand tools). These strategies will improve sustained work postures, reduce extreme range of motion and decrease risk of injury and pain arising from sustained and repetitive use of hand tools.

2. BEHAVIOURAL MODIFICATIONS

These modifications require the individual to take responsibility for implementing the changes in their own work practices. Primary recommendations include: alternating positions, improving manual handling techniques, stretching, and taking regular micro-breaks that also provide an opportunity to increase water consumption.

3. AWARENESS RAISING

Awareness raising is necessary to educate the women about safe work practices/behaviour and equipment use in order for them to be able to implement changes. This encompasses raising awareness of engineering controls, Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S), behaviour modification, and personal protective equipment, through information sheets (written in Chinese text), workshops, rural worker/OH&S educator, on-the-job training, and group sessions/support groups.

4. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

PPE will provide protection from the work environment and repetitive and/or sustained work postures. Recommended items include: back and shoulder support garments, hat, gloves, footwear, sunglasses, sleeve protection, facemasks, earplugs, and UV protective clothing.
5. PAIN MANAGEMENT

Pain management was identified as important for the women who are already experiencing pain. While some pain management strategies are explored, the scope of the project and time constraints did not allow for full investigation of these. Therefore, further research is required to determine effective and suitable pain management strategies for market garden workers. positions, improving manual handling techniques, stretching, and taking regular micro-breaks that also provide an opportunity to increase water consumption.

Conclusion

While this project has made final recommendations, the next stage is to implement these recommendations. WHAW should continue with further research and development of these recommendations in order for implementation to occur. Ongoing collaboration with the University of Sydney could provide opportunities for future student placements to continue the work started by this project. The employment of a rural worker would be an alternative for the implementation of the recommendations.
APPENDIX  6

Sample of Correspondence

Correspondence complied in collaboration with Chinese market gardener re proposed development on leased land.

Dear Mr XXXXX

RENEWAL OF LEASE FOR XXX WEST BOTANY STREET

I appreciate your meeting with me on the farm (together with an interpreter on Tuesday 20 August and for bringing with you the letter dated 12 July 2002, reference XXXXXXXX. With reference to this letter, I wish to reply in the order of the paragraphs in your letter to me.

Paragraph 1. In this paragraph you thank me for the three meetings and end with ‘the use of the interpreter was invaluable in this regard”. I wish to clarify that an interpreter was used on only one occasion, at the meeting at the end of June. No matters discussed at the first two meetings should therefore be considered.

Paragraph 3. I accept that it may be another two years before the building of the golf course. I would like to confirm that I will be able to maintain my current usage of the farm until that stage.

Paragraph 4. There is a statement within this paragraph that I have cultivated beds contrary to instructions from PlanningNSW. At no time have I received written instructions from PlanningNSW in this regard. I therefore refute the implication that I have not complied with your instructions.

Paragraph 5. I have a difference of opinion with your opinion of “unproductive land”. The majority of the land being subsumed is temporarily lying fallow on the instructions of Rockdale Council. Prior to my taking up the lease the land in question had always been under cultivation, as the presence of the irrigation pipes will testify. The land to the north of the block (dogleg) has three mushroom production sheds, as well as a turning circle for trucks, which is necessary in any farming operation. Your use of the work ‘productive’ implies only land that is ‘cultivated’ is productive.

Paragraph 5. Concerning your note that the rent will be varied. I believe that we need to discuss this proposal in more detail. I have made a number of improvements since starting to farm on this land. I attach a breakdown of costs of improvements that I have undertaken.

Paragraph 6. I am happy for PlanningNSW to undertake works to improve both the farming and heritage values of the farm, which would include obtaining advice from NSW Agriculture or appropriate farming consultants. I accept your offer to assist with any legal approvals that are needed.
Paragraph 7. Regarding drainage on the farm. I wish to state, that although flooding was once an issue, since taking over as lessee on this farm and undertaking drainage improvements, including raising beds, this is no longer an issue. It is imperative, therefore, that this situation remains the same. The statement that ‘soil from the uncultivated portion of the ease area is retained’ is confusing. Is the area from the golf course side or from my side of the proposed fence? If the soil is from the golf course side, please could tests be done on the soil prior to removal, as there is a possibility of acid sulfate soils being present?

Paragraph 8. I appreciate your assistance in repairing and improving the residence and that PlanningNSW will negotiate with Rockdale council for fulltime residential occupation. Would it be possible for a toilet to be included in the improvements to the building?

Paragraph 10. Please note my earlier comments regarding the cultivation of beds contrary to Planning NSWs instructions. I accept that the new boundary will go through the middle of the beds. I would like confirmation from PlanningNSW that I may be permitted to continue farming on the remaining portion once the boundaries are decided.

Paragraph 11. With regard to the mushroom farming operation. I have established that the Development Application from Rockdale Council is current. Mr XXXXXXXXX from Council will confirm this (D.A. XXXXX) I would request that Planning NSW assist in relocation of the containers to enable the mushroom farming operation to continue. It should be clearly stated that should the turning circle not be included in the area allocated to the farm the mushroom business would not be able to continue. It would be imperative that adequate compensation be paid for the re-location of this business ($70,000.00). The truck turning circle is vital to all farming operations.

Paragraph 12. I appreciate that you will be developing a Plan of Management for the farm. I would ask if it would be possible for PoM be developed with input from XXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXX.

Lastly, as you would be aware there have been many people, from different government and non-government departments, visiting the farm in the past. This has made it very difficult for me to keep track of who is saying what. Would it be possible for one person to take the responsibility of this negotiation? This would make the process much easier for me.

Thank you for the opportunity of replying to your letter.

Sincerely,
Dear Minister,

Thank you for the opportunity of providing you with further information on the background and details of our concerns in regard to the use of agricultural chemicals in the market garden industry across the Sydney Basin.

I do apologise that developing the correspondence has taken a little longer than originally intended. However I am sure you will recall the presentation made to you at your recent visit to Western Sydney Area Health Diversity Health Institute where I spoke on this issue from the perspective of those growers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALDB).

Although the focus in this correspondence is on market gardeners from CALDB many of the issues are highly relevant for farmers from English speaking backgrounds with limited formal education and poor English literacy. Furthermore, access to accurate information on the availability of pesticides for specific crops is often difficult even for professionals to access because of confusion around the classification of crops as noted later.

The Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) evaluates, registers and regulates pesticides and veterinary medicines in Australia. Pesticides include all broad acre agriculture products and all household insecticides and pesticides. Veterinary medicines include all veterinary products such as vaccines and antibiotics and also other products such as worming treatments and flea and tick washes.

The two main issues linked to the work of the APVMA which impact on market gardeners are:

**Issue 1** The lack of Registered Chemicals suitable for ‘minor crops’ such as Asian vegetables.

**Issue 2** The lack of appropriate labeling of products to meet the needs of a multicultural Australia.

A third issue is related to the lack of a national co-ordinated monitoring system of adverse events experienced by agricultural workers from exposure to chemicals.

**Issue 3** The lack of a national co-ordinated monitoring system for the collection of data on adverse events including acute and chronic exposure to agricultural chemicals. There appears to be little data collection, at local, regional, or national levels on adverse incidents and possible health effects.

I have taken the liberty of requesting Associate Professor Dr. Frances Parker of University of Western Sydney who has worked with CALDB market gardeners in the Sydney Basin over the past fifteen years to assist in the compilation of information in this correspondence. Her work has bought her into contact with all levels of Federal and State Governments and their agencies as she has raised these issues in the past.
Two publications from research conducted by Dr. Parker (Parker 2000, Parker & Suriyabanadara 2000) focus on the main issues of Occupational Health and Safety for this population group.

**Issue 1  Registration of Chemicals suitable for "minor" crops such as Asian vegetables**

In general there appear to be few pesticides registered for Asian vegetables and for some major Asian vegetables and diseases there are no registered pesticides. Pesticides may be registered for use on a particular crop for a particular pest or disease in one state, but not in another leading to confusion amongst growers. Growers see that a product can be used in one state and not in another and are unable to determine if this inconsistency is because of "a technicality" or that the product is harmful to human health or the environment. This leads to a lack of integrity of the registration system, and a lack of "trust' of the regulatory system in the minds of many growers.

An important consequence of the lack of registered chemicals for Asian vegetables and other minor crops, is that many growers use pesticides "off-label", meaning not in accordance with the instructions on the label. As the pesticide is not registered for the purpose for which it is used there are no application rates, or directions for use.

A permit system has been introduced to overcome the lack of registered pesticides for minor crops. However, information on what is available through the permit system is not accessible to most growers.

CALDB growers are particularly disadvantaged in accessing the permit system, which has been established to alleviate the problem with minor crops. Applying for permits is unduly complicated, particularly for growers with out access to the internet and with poor English skills.

Only very limited progress has been made in this process for Asian vegetables.

The classification and nomenclature system used for vegetables is in need of clarification. For example does a registration for peas include snowpeas which are eaten with the shell, rather than peeled, as are traditional peas? In addition the classification for brassicas (leafy type vegetable) does not include Asian leafy vegetables.

Although the problem of the lack of registered pesticides for the so-called minor crops is being increasingly acknowledged as an important issue throughout the horticultural industry, little action has been taken until now. I understand that some progress is being made in the registration of chemicals for minor use, however it seems to be taking an inordinate amount of time and suggest that the national approach be fully implemented.

These issues have become urgent with the introduction of the NSW Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implementation of the NSW Pesticides Act 1999. The Act requires all commercial users of pesticides to keep a record of use of all chemicals in English – this record can be inspected by the EPA upon demand.
The lack of registered pesticides and the lack of available information as to the permit system were raised as critical and urgent issues during a meeting in 2002 between the NSW EPA, the APVMA (formerly NRA), Horticulture Australia NSW Agriculture, and NSW Farmers.

As the APVMA does not provide ‘minor use’ data on pesticide labels without appropriate registration growers are being forced into the invidious position of having to record the use of unregistered chemicals. If they use pesticides illegally they will be prosecuted!

So on the one hand we have growers wanting to uphold the law and take responsibility for the safe use of pesticides and on the other hand government agencies not providing them with relevant information presented in a form that will assist them to meet their legal requirements.

**Issue 2** The lack of appropriate labeling of products to meet the needs of a multicultural Australia.

According to the ABS census data around 30% of those working in the Australian horticultural industry are from CALDB. In the Sydney Basin 90% of those working in market gardening are from CALDB, and around 95% of those in the cut flower industry. Around 90% of growers cannot read English. However, all information on pesticide use is only available in technical English. There is little or no information in plain English, and no translated information. Material relating to occupational health and safety is communicated through Material Data Safety Handling Sheets and is highly complex.

Although many farms are family farms on which the labour of women is essential, there is no readily available information on the desirability of avoiding pesticide exposure during pregnancy and lactation. There is little information on the specific OHS implications of pesticide exposure in plastic polyhouses (greenhouses) which are enclosed, and extremely hot.

Although there is a lack of this basic data for greenhouses their use is rapidly increasing under pressure from the supermarkets and advisory officers. Greenhouses are said to be "good for the vegetables" but their OHS implications for workers appear to be largely ignored.

**Issue 3** The need for a national co-ordinated monitoring system for the collection of data on adverse events including acute and chronic exposure to agricultural chemicals to be kept by Area Health Services and data transferred to a national register.

There is scant information on the incidence of adverse events in Australia including acute and chronic exposure due to agricultural chemicals. No single authority has been instructed to develop data of this type. The most appropriate authority to collect the data would be State and Federal Health Departments. Data should be collected at Hospital Emergency Centres and by general practitioners and forwarded to a national body such as National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC) or the Register of Adverse Events which is managed by the APVMA.
A recent discussion with Workcover NSW leads me to understand both NSW Workcover and the national body NOHSC are no longer recording classification in data collection to identify language spoken at home or country of birth. This information is vital for targeting OH&S information to Australia’s multicultural workforce.

Most market gardeners in the Sydney Basin are unaware of the need for blood testing to monitor their exposure to organophosphates and carbamates. Many GP’s appear to be unaware of the OHS issues and pesticides for this sector, and accessing blood testing services is problematic. Thus, there is a lack of data at both the systemic and individual level.

I recognise many of these issues are complex and cross various departments which emphasises the need for ‘a whole of government approach’.

Attached are copies of correspondence from representatives of the Sydney Basin Market Garden Project – Hawkesbury/ Nepean Working Group of which WHAW is a partner to NSW Agriculture and its responses (I apologise for the poor quality of print on one of the letters).

Thank you for giving WHAW the opportunity of providing you with further information on these issues and the impact that they have on the health and wellbeing of all the growers but in particular the women and children from CALDB.

Thank you for the opportunity of replying to your letter.

Sincerely,
APPENDIX 8

CHINESE SPEAKING WOMEN WORKING IN MARKET GARDENS ACROSS THE SYDNEY BASIN
THE PROJECT AND ITS EARLY DEVELOPMENT

DECEMBER 2001
(Adapted Version 2005)

Vivienne Strong
Lynn McDonald
Wendy Thomson
1. BACKGROUND

The development of this project began along the lines that many projects before it had taken – someone recognised a need in a community and shared their concern with a fellow worker. This was how the Camden and Hills Area Working Groups for Chinese Women who work in market gardens in the Camden Local Government Area (LGA), South Western Sydney Area Health Service (SWSAHS) and the Hills Area (Western Sydney Area Health Service) commenced.

Much of the information for this background is drawn from work carried out by Dr. Frances Parker, School of Social Ecology University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury, and her staff within the past fifteen years and is a very brief overview of the market gardening community and its issues.

This report has been developed at the request of the Western Sydney Area Health Service "Women’s Health at Work" Program Steering Committee to put into context the beginnings of the broader project and the collaborative development as it occurred across the Sydney Basin in 2001.

It will briefly look at:
- general information on groups from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CLDB) working in market gardening
- early steps in community contact
- the development of the Camden and Hills Area Chinese Women’s Information Days
- evaluation of the Camden and Hills Area Chinese Women’s Information Days
- future directions for each of the Working Groups

1.2 MARKET GARDENING WITHIN THE SYDNEY BASIN

Market Gardening within the Sydney Basin generally extends from Wollondilly, Camden, and Campbelltown in the south west to Penrith and the Lower Blue Mountains, across to the Hawkesbury and Galston in the north west, with a heritage listed area located in the centre of Botany.

The extent of the contribution of people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CLDB) had received little investigation until UWS was commissioned by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) to develop an effective extension strategy for the safe use of farm chemicals by market gardeners of CLDB.

It is a common perception that market gardening in the Sydney Basin is a settlement strategy to give immigrants a start in ‘a new country’ and once they obtain sufficient resources they move on from this form of employment, however this is not the case. The vegetable industry, or market gardening in the Sydney Basin is of significant economic importance, it is responsible for 40% of the value of NSW vegetable production, and 90% of Sydney’s perishable vegetables.
Market gardens are small intensive family farms generally on the outskirts of cities in which the contribution and labour of women, and to a lesser extent children, is essential (Parker 2000a, 2000b).

Preliminary work indicates that the sector is highly heterogeneous and is comprised of longer established communities of Maltese, Italians, Croatians, Macedonians, Greeks and Germans and more recent arrivals of Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Lebanese, Iraqis, Koreans and Thais. Chinese are both long term and new arrival growers.

Women undertake the labour intensive jobs such as weeding, hand chipping, picking, bunching, washing and packing with 30% of crop spraying being carried out by the women, except in the Lebanese community where women do not spray at all (Parker 2000a, 2000b).

Women indicate they experience overuse symptoms in their hands and arms from these frequently repeated fine motor skill actions.

Women are isolated with infrequent access to the outside world but appear to be important in the maintenance of social networks for some groups, as men consider themselves too busy. Most women do not drive and public transport is infrequent if available at all.

The role of women varies, however they are frequently responsible for much of the production and they are always responsible for the domestic duties in the family.

The inclusion of women in the decision making process varies from group to group eg: Cambodian born women have considerable control of the household finances and decision making process in Cambodia, however it is not known what effect migration has on this influence. On the other hand Lebanese women have little or no control in financial matters with males in the family taking responsibility for all financial transactions.

English language competence of the women is usually less than that of men however many men also have limited English. Some women learn English from television however most do not read English, frequently relying on children or friends to interpret English information for them.

Men have better English skills and negotiate transactions at Flemington markets in English, while women are important in marketing if growers have developed supply networks eg; to restaurants. Self-identified information shows that none of the Indo-Chinese farmers can write English.

2. FIRST STEPS

The first steps taken in the development of this project can be traced back to 1998 when the Hills Community Aid and Information Service was the recipient of a WESROC grant to appoint a rural community development worker (CDO).

Ms Teresa Perham held the position of CDO until 2000. An Advisory Group was established to direct the project. The Advisory Group was chaired by Dr. Frances Parker (UWS).

Teresa worked through her organisation to develop a project to meet the needs of Chinese speaking growers in the Hills area. This work brought her in contact with Ashley Stenn.
(NSW Dept Agriculture) and Dr. Dipak Aditya. Dipak had been employed in September 2000 by the NSW Premiers Taskforce to develop a project on "Market Gardening in a Culturally Diverse Society". This appointment was in response to much of the work previously done by Dr. Parker (Parker 2000a, and 2000b).

During his early investigations and farm visits Dipak noted "I saw only women working in many of the farms, while the men went to the market selling their produce. On speaking with these women I found that Chinese women are not only involved in weeding or packing vegetables, they are indeed involved in the day to day running of the farm, taking part in all aspects of farm operation including pesticide spraying.

Chinese women received no formal training for chemical use while many men have gone through the required training. Chinese women work long hours on the farm, often staying on farms longer than the men, they therefore have more chance of pesticide exposure".

Dipak along with Teresa, Ashley and Frances expressed their concern for the health of the women and hoped to develop and pilot a training course on the safe use of pesticides for Chinese speaking women growers. However they were not optimistic that this could occur. Again, Dipak noted "we did not foresee any immediate prospect for a pilot program although women were saying they needed more knowledge in pesticide use. When we suggested that the women might leave the farms to attend a training course we were regarded with suspicion because the venue was not known to the women's family members".

As a strategy to overcome some of the barriers and enable women to attend the training, Dipak proposed that other community organisations with a focus on Chinese speaking people be invited to work with the group. A proposed date to meet with growers was made for May 2001 and Ashley, Teresa, Dipak and Joyce Ma (the Chinese Community Worker from Hills Community Health) set about encouraging the growers to attend.

It was at this point that Vivienne Strong "Women's Health At Work" (WHAW) Program Manager, made the first contact with key people from the project. Joyce was aware that the focus of the WHAW Program was women from CLD backgrounds in workplaces. She invited Vivienne to attend the May meeting to gauge its relevance to the Program and what possible contribution WHAW could make to the project. This event bought WHAW in contact with Dr. Frances Parker, Dr. Dipak Aditya and Mr Ashley Senn. Ashley had met Ms Rita Kelman from Kemps Creek. Rita is Chinese (Cantonese speaking) and is part of a key business servicing growers in the Kemps Creek area. Rita was to become pivotal to the success of projects implemented with the Chinese speaking women growers and their families.

Dipak takes up the story "The meeting on that particular day was a turning point, although 'morning coffee' at that time seemed inappropriate for the group we targeted. The meeting with the group revealed many short term and long-term needs for the women. One of the key actions was not to lose the momentum of the day by taking a group decision that we would start a SMARTtrain AQF3 course in June 2001. It had taken us just six months to develop sufficient credibility and trust in the community to get to this point!"

"The pesticide-training course commenced on 5th June 2001 and finished on 3rd July 2001. The course was conducted at Rita's house at Kemps Creek with Rita acting as the coordinator. Seven women and 4 men completed the training course. The course was delivered with an accredited
Cantonese interpreter from the Community Relations Commission and Mr Geoff Turner from Richmond TAFE and Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture as the training provider. In effect it was a unique example of our effort in pulling resources together from various agencies in delivering a much sought after course for women.”

At this stage The Hills Working Group represented the following organisations:

- WSAHS Hills Community Health
- Hills Community Aid and information Centre
- University Western Sydney, Hawkesbury
- NSW Agriculture Premier’s Project
- WSAHS Women’s Health at Work Program

Meanwhile unbeknown to The Hills Working Group steps were being taken to contact Chinese speaking market garden workers in the South Western Areas of Sydney by the Camden Council Community Projects Officer. Part of her role was to meet the information needs of Camden residents of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CLDB). She contacted Macarthur Migrant Resource Centre, Campbelltown to seek assistance with statistical information in determining which language groups were present in the community. It was during these discussions they recognised they shared a common concern and had a project that they could work on in partnership.

Their initial strategy was designed to provide Camden Council and community service information to the Chinese market gardeners through the distribution of an information package in Chinese. Information requested during a consultative process by Camden Council with Chinese growers included:

- the safe use of pesticides
- youth health
- reproductive health
- aged care and information for seniors
- child care
- location and connection to community services
- English skills

The consultation process bought them in contact with the ESL teacher from Leppington Public School who teaches children of Chinese background and the president of the Australian Chinese Growers Association.

In developing the packages they noted “There were no funds to translate existing Council information in any quantity, so I put together a single page outlining basic Council services and contact numbers. We then gathered any information already in the Chinese language that we had determined would be useful for the community".
In doing this MMRC contacted the Women’s Health Nurse for Macarthur Area Health Service. She was able to provide many health brochures in Chinese". Eighty packages were distributed.

The Camden Working Group had now grown to three and a key community contact. This embryonic Working Group met with the Bi-lingual Community Educator Co-ordinator for SWSAHS. This meeting was followed by an invitation to attend the Leppington Field Day held in June 2001. The Working Group also came in contact with the Director of Rossmore Preschool, requesting assistance from Camden Council in translating brochures into Chinese for families who she thought may wish to access the pre-school service. Later on Mission Australia applied and was successful in obtaining funding of $8000 from NSW Dept. Of Community Services (DOCS) to assist her work with Chinese speaking families.

The WHN approached WHAW to speak with the Working Group. In response to the group discussion WHAW identified an opportunity of developing the project in collaboration (given the broader scope of WHAW as a State wide service). The proposal was embraced by the Working Group members and as they say in the classics ---- “the rest is history”.

At this stage the Camden Working Group represented the following organisations:

- Camden Council
- Leppington Public School
- Macarthur Area Health Service

3. RATIONALE Why seek to work with this community?

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CLDB) upon migrating to a new country are separated from their pre-existing social networks and supports and are often more reliant upon their male partners. They frequently find themselves in circumstances that are isolating, lonely and emotionally distressing which may lead to poor mental health (Alcorso & Schofield 1991).

CLDB women’s isolation can be intensified by their inability to speak English as the culture of service's provision and service providers is dominated by English speaking professionals (Alcorso & Schofield 1991).
CLDB women's health status is known to deteriorate with their increased period of residence in Australia. The significant aspect of their environment that may lead to poor health is their location in the labour market, which often exposes them to hazardous occupations. The nature and condition of unpaid work in maintaining households, caring for family members, constraints on access to key social resources such as English language courses, social support, housing and transport exacerbates the decline in their health status (Alcorso & Schofield 1991).

The incidence of cervical cancer is higher amongst Asian women, therefore preventative cervical cancer screening services need to be directed toward these populations (Alcorso & Schofield 1991). Also, the incidence of gestational diabetes mellitus is higher amongst Asian women (Cheung et al 2001).

Parker (2000a, 2000b) identified Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) issues for market gardeners. They included the unsafe use of farm chemicals including pesticides and herbicides. Many of the growers experience musculo-skeletal overuse symptoms, workplace lacerations (seem to have limited knowledge of first-aid), and work in extremes of heat and cold in enclosed hot-houses. Working in the fields exposes gardeners skin to increased sun damage. Lastly, self-employed market gardeners are usually not covered by workplace insurance or legislation.

The provision of health services in Australia is based on two principles:

- the right to equality of access to health care services regardless of cultural origin or linguistic skill
- the responsibility of the health system to respond appropriately to its target population (Foster and Stockley 1988, quoted in Maltby 1998)

Population data: of the total NSW population employed in agriculture 32% were female (32,000) (ABS 1996). It is difficult to estimate the population of women employed in agriculture in the Sydney Basin as they are frequently not included in the census as employees.


Location: Appendix 2 (attached) Diagrammatic Representation of Locations of Ethnic Farmers in The Sydney Basin.

Health status: no reliable data exists and exposure to chemicals is unlikely to be reported.

Where does the community get its information: most men get information from other growers, suppliers of chemicals, farm equipment suppliers and repairers, merchants at the markets (Flemington), while both women and men listen to ethnic radio.
4. REACHING THE CHINESE SPEAKING COMMUNITY IN SOUTH WESTERN AND WESTERN SYDNEY

The Camden Working Group met on 26th June 2001 to discuss the most appropriate strategy to commence outreach to the community. A woman from the Chinese community who knew many of the growers in the area was approached to join the Working Group and proved to be a vital link in the communication chain between her community and the Working Group. With this woman as part of the planning group it did not take long to decide our next move. It was agreed to develop a Health and Community Services Information Day for Chinese women growers, their families and their community. At this stage the "Safe Use of Pesticide" course was running and women were enjoying their legitimised reason for leaving the farms and meeting socially.

The next eight weeks was a time of frantic activity for every member of the Camden Working Group culminating in a very successful Health and Community Services Information Day. Over 280 women, children and men from the Chinese market garden community, growers representatives, service providers, representatives of NSW Dept. of Technical & Further Education (TAFE) and the NSW Dept. of Agriculture (NSW Ag) attended.

4.1 THE KEMPS CREEK HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES INFORMATION DAY (PROGRAM APPENDIX 3).

Date: 27th August 2001
Time: 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
Location: Kemps Creek Bowling Club – familiar to all growers across the LGAs of Camden and Liverpool.

Purposes of the event:

✦ To engage the women from the Chinese market growing community by providing health and community service information in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere as determined by the community.
✦ To present certificates of completion to women who had completed the first "Pesticide Training Course" for Chinese speaking women
✦ To provide a nourishing Chinese luncheon
✦ To include children’s fun events and entertainment
✦ To consult with a small number of women as representatives of the women in the community as a means to assessing some of the community needs
✦ To obtain community evaluation on the appropriateness of the event
✦ To obtain service provider evaluation on the event
Services Attending:
- NSW POLICE SERVICE
- ETHNIC AGED CARE
- MACARTHUR AREA HEALTH SERVICE
- KARITANE
- GRANVILLE/LIVERPOOL DISTRICT DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION & TRAINING
- NEPEAN MIGRANT ACCESS
- CENTRELINK
- BREASTSCREEN WESTERN
- OUTREACH CAMPBELLTOWN COLLEGE OF TAFE
- DIABETES AUSTRALIA NSW
- CAMDEN COUNCIL
- FPA HEALTH MULTICULTURAL SERVICES
- MACARTHUR MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE
- SWSAHS INTERPRETER SERVICE

4.2 EVALUATION
Consultation with a small number of women representatives in the community: this process was conducted by three Bi lingual Community Educators (BCE’s) who approached 25 women inviting them to provide information which might assist in project development (APPENDIX 4).

4.2.2 General community evaluation: members of the community were invited to complete the questionnaire prior to leaving the Expo location. Thirty five (35) people responded to the questionnaire (APPENDIX 5).

Service provider evaluation: A total of nineteen (19) services attended the event with ten (10) services completing evaluation forms (APPENDIX 6).

Service Provision: The consultation conducted by the bi-lingual community educators with twenty five women from the Chinese market garden community was too small to be representative but did provide some insight to the issues faced by the women in the community.

The questions asked were:
- Is there a service/s that you need but is not available in your local area?
- If the service were available what would make it possible for you to use that service?
- What day of the week and time of the day would you use that service?
Sixteen (16) women responded to these questions - (some gave more than one response).

A number of identified services are actually available in the area ... the response to the questions are the perceptions of the Chinese women interviewed ... if your service is one identified is there a way it could be made more accessible to this community?

### 4.2.7 Perspectives on Partnership

Following the success of the Kemps Creek Health & Community Information Day the Camden Working Group requested an opportunity to discuss the following issues:

- to document the history of the team
- to understand why the team worked
- to look at the partnership and how it makes up the whole
- to establish a basis from which to move on
- to document and legitimise the difference between this team and other teams
- achievements are valid and recognised
- the process is credible
- breaking the rules: is this OK and did it help make the team work better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q (a) Service identified as &quot;not available in local area&quot;</th>
<th>Number of respondents who identified service as &quot;not available in local area&quot;</th>
<th>(b) Things that would make it possible for women to use the service</th>
<th>(c) Preferred day and time of week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English language classes</td>
<td>Seven (7)</td>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>Monday – am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese teacher</td>
<td>All day – any time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer classes</td>
<td>Three (3)</td>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>Monday – am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter services</td>
<td>Three (3)</td>
<td>More available at banks etc</td>
<td>All day – any time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s health service</td>
<td>Two (2)</td>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>Monday – all day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood nurse</td>
<td>One (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anytime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>One (1)</td>
<td>Come to home</td>
<td>Seven days per week, 6am – 9am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise classes</td>
<td>One (1)</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td>Monday - pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The meeting was facilitated by Camden Council and to enable the Working Group to achieve the aims for the meeting discussion was based on the following questions:

- when/why did the team come together?
- why did you join the team?
- what were your expectations?
- strengths of this team
- weaknesses of this team
- what are the opportunities for this team?
- what are the threats to this team?
- other thoughts
- where to from here?

5. REACHING THE CHINESE SPEAKING COMMUNITY IN "THE HILLS" AREA

As previously discussed the growth of this project and the participation of WHAW emanated from the original meeting held in May 2001 in the Hills. Wishing to build on the successful Kemps Creek Health and Community Services Information Day two members of the Hills Working Group visited a number of growers in the area to ascertain their response to a proposed Hills Information Day. The idea was supported by the growers and so the community with the Working Group planned an Information Day that would address some of the issues experienced by the women growers and their families in this district.

The original Hills Working Group was joined by:

- Australian Chinese Community Association
- The Hills Family Centre

5.1 THE HILLS INFORMATION DAY

Aims and Objectives

- to provide opportunity for regular social gathering for the women
- to explore appropriate strategies to provide information to the group
- to develop leadership within the group
- to liaise with service providers relevant to Chinese rural women and families

The Working Group planned to hold an information day on 1st November 2001 at Annangrove.
A program was prepared in consultation with the community and included an invited speaker, a video (*Healthy vegetable farms*), games, dance, lunch and discussion (Appendix 8). The speaker was the Director of the Worker’s Health Centre, Lidcombe.

HFC and ACCA had previously visited most of the Chinese farms in the district. They made personal visits to invite the families to the day. Other organisational tasks on the program including lunch (brought in), games, transport, venue (Guides hall), child-care and interpreter (Cantonese) were shared within the committee. Phone calls were made to remind the farmers the week before the day.

The day was changed from Thursday to Monday 12th November at the suggestion of the farmers.

### 5.2 EVALUATION

- seven (7) families attended which represented 35% of the target families
- eighteen (18) Chinese speaking farmers came on the day including 12 female and 6 male
- two children attended with their family
- one family gave an apology
- five women took advantage of the bus for transport
- others came by car
- most did not arrive until almost 11.30am probably because of farming commitments
- they were ready to leave at 2.30pm, especially the men
- twenty workers and Working Group members attended the day

There was good interaction in the session on workers health, with the women identifying where they had pains, cuts/bruises and/or nausea. Growers raised questions concerning pesticide usage with NSW Agriculture while the EPA spoke on the new legislation regarding training in pesticide use.

In a small group session the participants were encouraged to give verbal evaluation of the day and to suggest ideas and times for future meetings.

The participants enjoyed most activities on the day. Some were eager to catch up with friends. They enjoyed the dance and the talk. Most had seen the video before and felt that it was not practical for them to farm in the way demonstrated. The high cost of irrigation water was a problem raised.

Training in computing or spoken English was not considered possible in their busy farm schedule however tutoring in the home might be possible. Further pesticide training is needed as none of the women present had undertaken such training.
6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

From the early beginnings of this project it became apparent that while the Chinese speaking growers and their families share a common language, culture and in theory workplace issues in reality there are subtle differences from district to district. As you will have noticed when reading this report both Working Groups have developed different strategies to impart information to the community in response to the expressed needs of each community. If this project is to have long term benefits for each of the communities represented the strategies must be developed in partnership with the group.

6.1 FUTURE DIRECTIONS DETERMINED BY THE CAMDEN WORKING GROUP

- To maintain the current Camden Market Garden Working Group and co-opting other appropriate organisational representatives as required
- To focus resources on Chinese speaking women and their families working in market gardens in the Camden Liverpool region
- To recruit a project officer funded by Women’s Health at Work to work with key partners in the implementation of sustainable strategies to meet the needs of the community as identified by the community and the Working Group
- To develop the project using an action research method of determining community priorities and solutions
- To develop the skills of individual community women through engaging them in the planning and implementation of project strategies.

6.2 FUTURE DIRECTIONS DETERMINED BY THE HILLS WORKING GROUP

The committee will continue with its present structure but it is envisaged the farmers group will nominate one or two people to join the committee. It is seen as important that the group is ‘owned’ by the members. Most considered they could help at least by bringing along friends in the future.

All members of the community expressed a desire to meet again, probably every 2-3 months with Monday, Friday or Saturday being the best day.

The Working Group will reconnect with the community in the beginning of 2002 to decide on the next issue and how they wish to address it.

6.3 OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

During the development of the project in both the Camden and Hills areas a group of service providers from the Hawkesbury Nepean Area met to discuss the possibility of setting up an intersectoral working group to address the many issues and concerns of CLDB growers in that area. WHAW has committed to work with this group also ... the story will continue.
REFERENCES


Parker F. 2000a, 'Developing an Understanding of the Occupational Health and Safety Practices of Market Gardeners and Cut Flower Growers of Non English Background in the Sydney Basin' University of Western Sydney, Richmond

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