

“Saibai Success” Saibai Island State School

by Melanie Doyle, Nutrition & Physical Activity Project Coordinator

Our Tuckshop Procedure Documentation and Success

Tuckshop Procedure Documentation

Author: Ms Melanie Doyle

A visitor to the school from Queensland Health looked at what had been achieved at the tuckshop and aptly dubbed it “Saibai Success”, so here is information as to what we have been doing on Saibai.

Background information:

I thought it would be useful to paint the picture of where I am coming from and issues faced here on Saibai Island.

Saibai is an Island in the Torres Strait, 3km off Papua New Guinea coastline. It is a flat, predominantly Mangrove island with the highest point being 1.7m. It has a high propensity for flooding, during the wet season and with king tides. However we do have a bitumen airstrip,

which allows access all year round. The Island is about 20km by 15km, so quite large, but only a small proportion is inhabited. The population is transient, but is recorded between 350 & 400 people. The population is 70% Indigenous, Torres Strait Islander people, with 25% of Papuan descent and 5% of Anglo-Saxon descent.

The infrastructure that exists is constantly being improved and at present there is a new IBIS store, Council, Health Centre, Community Hall and Saibai Enterprises, (which includes a variety store, takeaway, and canteen). The infrastructure for the island is quite good, but the cost of items is still at a premium, compared with mainstream prices, due to added freight costs.

Until recently there were two barge companies delivering goods to the island twice weekly, but now there is only one, which means once per week deliveries.

The school has an enrolment of 82 children. Our supplies are ordered from Cairns and delivered weekly (which involved considerable menu planning and ordering, as there is a 2-week turn around for ordering and receiving food).

Tuckshop:

As part of the Saibai Island Child Nutrition Project, I wanted to look at food supply and choices available to the children at the school.

On Saibai approximately 95% of the children eat all their daytime food from the school tuckshop and as such are a great way to have a significant impact on the nutrition.

As money is at times limited, the major focuses were making nutritious foods available to the children, in a way they enjoyed, and at a reasonable cost.

Our tuckshop was not all that different to mainstream schools in that facilities and time were limited which meant the food served was energy dense, generally high fat and of average cost. In most tuckshops, including what was at Saibai, it is not simply a matter of being resistant to change but it is more a factor of tuckshop convenors and staff not having the information required, to make all the changes.

The biggest concerns that have been observed with tuckshops are the misconceptions that “healthy food doesn’t make money” and “the children won’t eat those foods”. We faced those issues here at Saibai, particularly the concern over losing money on healthy foods, but the

following brief case study will show that these “concerns” really are misconceptions.

Most importantly still is that if we can do it here on Saibai, then anyone can, and anything is possible if you want to make it happen!

Our tuckshop then:

One note before I begin: Heat and serve products are easier to prepare but much more expensive, and are generally highly processed and are not nutritionally adequate. We need to choose less processed foods, have fewer options, and increase the nutrient density of those few choices served.

- The daily menu used to consist of one/ two “heat & serve” product which included: Meat pies, sausage rolls, hotdogs, processed hamburgers & chicken burgers, pizza slices, ready made lasagne & spaghetti bolognese.
- There were also a limited number of sandwiches being sold usually peanut butter, vegemite, devon & sauce, or ham.
- Snack foods were also readily available and were the usual choices—potato crisps salami sticks, ice creams, icy poles, & hello pandas (small biscuits with chocolate inside).
- There were some nutritious choices available, which included apples, fruit tetra packs, sultanas and cheese sticks.
- The prices of Saibai tuckshop were OK, but could easily be improved with the removal of heat & serve product, replacing this with dishes cooked from scratch which are more time consuming but less expensive. Hence profit instantly improved.
- The hot food items ranged between \$1.50 to \$2.50, with sandwiches either \$1.50 or \$2.00. Snack foods ranged from 50c to \$2.00.

It was evident from the beginning that to change the aforementioned system was not going to be an easy transition, and took many hours of perseverance to develop a menu that was easy to prepare, nutritious and profitable.

How and what we changed:

The first area I looked at was removing the less nutritious snack choices which meant potato crisps, ice-creams, icy poles and biscuits and

replacing them with muesli bars, more fresh fruit, fruit chews, hard boiled eggs, frozen yoghurt, muffins, vegetable pikelets, Le Snack, & fruit/ nut nibble bags.

- All our snack prices now are between 50c and \$1.00 with fresh fruit and less processed choices being the best value and lowest price.

I came up against resistance to begin with the issues most commonly raised that of:

- Lack of time
- Healthy foods are too costly and
- The children won't buy it.

I sat down with the aim to develop a menu that had great nutrition, good variety, and lots of taste and at affordable prices. The more difficult area to change was that of the hot food!!!

- Evidently all our hot food is now selling at \$1.80, (except for toasted sandwiches, which are \$1.20) which we found is less confusing, for the children and their families.

The dishes I devised were based around ease of preparation for tuckshop staff and to ensure maximum taste. Teething problems were overcome with patience and we reviewed and modified the menu to allow easy running and came up with what works effectively today.

So at present we are running a 3-week rotational menu, which has a different choice of hot food for everyday of the week. We are also having 3 choices of sandwiches everyday.

The new menu and new operation has been really successful and well received by all, with a resultant increase in profit evident.

Our tuckshop now:

Saibai Island State School Tuckshop Menu

Hot Chicken Rolls	\$1.80
Veggie Burgers	\$1.80
Baked Bean Nachos	\$1.80
Spaghetti Bolognaise	\$1.80
Toasted Sandwich	\$1.20
Ham & Cheese, Chicken & Corn or Spaghetti & Cheese	
Chicken Burgers	\$1.80

Chicken & Veggie Pasta	\$1.80
Stuffed Potato	\$1.80
Sloppy Joes	\$1.80
Chicken Submarines	\$1.80
Corn Rolls (2)	\$1.80
Frankenfurters	\$1.80
Homemade Hamburgers	\$1.80
Plain Salad Sandwich	\$1.00
Spaghetti Sandwich	\$1.20
Egg & Lettuce Sandwich	\$1.20
Baked Bean Sandwich	\$1.20
Ham & Salad Sandwich	\$1.20
Meat & Salad Sandwich	\$1.80
Chicken & Salad Sandwich	\$1.80

Snacks

Fresh Fruit (apple, mandarin, banana)	0.50
Sultanas	0.50
Fruit & Nut Nibble Bags	0.50
Veggie Pikelets (for two)	0.50
Boiled Egg	0.50
Cheese Stick	0.50
Muffins	0.50
Tetra Fruit Snack Packs	1.20
Muesli Bars (lunch only)	0.70
Le Snack (lunch only)	0.70
Icy Sticks (lunch only)	1.00
Frozen Yoghurt (lunch only)	1.50

Drinks

Plain Milk	0.80
Bottled Water	1.00
Homemade Sustagen Milkshakes	1.00
Homemade Smoothies	1.00
100% Popper Juice	1.20
Flavoured Breaker	1.20
Diet Soft drink (Adults only)	2.20

One of the big issues of resistance was centred on profit. It was thought that by implementing the healthy changes I outlined above, the tuckshop could not make a profit. But the answer to that is on the contrary. Our tuckshop now is doing better than it has ever, with more sales and with a better profit margin on every item sold!!!

Our tuckshop is not run by a P & C (as so many others are) but is funded by the school, and could not possibly have been making a profit in the method it was running before all these changes.

With the heat & serve product so commonly used, it is definitely quicker and hence less time consuming, but the items are far more expensive to buy in. So thus when weighing it all up and comparing the cost of an extra hours wage and using/ making all fresh food, with buying everything pre-made we still came out on top.

It seemed in the past our school was not overly concerned with profit or loss (which would be a different scenario if the P & C were running it), and as such a true costing of items sold etc had not been done.

The costing of items to be sold is now documented. In order to make changes to the system, and now utilise self-preparation of food to be sold, a thorough costing was required to convince all parties concerned that it could be profitable.

I will outline the major sellers in the previous system and the relative costs and profit/loss figures.

Costing of our biggest selling items of the past:

The biggest seller in our tuckshop in the past was meat pie:

Meat Pies

Meat pies 1 ctn (16) 32.80

= 2.05 each (excluding freight)

Sold for \$2.00

Pasta Blasta

Spaghetti Bolognaise (24) 33.84

= 1.41 each (excluding freight)

Sold for \$1.50

As you can see the pie was being sold for less than it was costing to buy, wholesale, which does not include the freight component to get it to Saibai Island. There were other similar items being sold at a loss or only a very small profit, which wouldn't even cover the freight and wages element.

Profit is certainly not the only focus (I wish the real focus was great nutrition but in most situations it is not) but it is still a genuine concern, as the tuckshop needs to make some profit or at least cover costs to survive.

Below I have listed the costing of the successful items on our menu and will provide a bound copy of the recipes and procedures in a booklet form in the future.

Please note that the ingredients are shipped in from our wholesaler in Cairns, and it may be possible for you to reduce the cost further shopping locally or getting product on special discount if appropriate.

Costing of items sold now:

Baked Bean Nachos

= 0.77 each (max)

Baked Spuds with a Twist

= 0.72 each (approx)

Chicken & Veggie Pasta

= 1.33 each

Chicken Burgers

= 0.75 each

Chicken Submarines

= 0.61 each

Chilli Con Carne

= 0.90 per serve

Corn Rolls

= 0.78 per serve (3 slices)

Frozen Yoghurt

= 0.81 each

Hamburger

= 1.26 each

Hot Chicken Rolls

= 1.00 each

Frankenfurters

= 0.66 each

Meat & Salad sandwich

= 1.00 each

Milk Shakes

= max 65c each

Sloppy Joes

= 0.80 each

Spaghetti Bolognese

= 0.75 each

Toasted sandwiches (each)

Ham & Cheese	0.55
Spaghetti & Cheese	0.45
Ham & Tomato	0.55
Chicken & Creamed Corn	0.45

Veggie Burgers

= 0.95

All of the above items are sold at \$1.80 with only milkshakes \$1.00 and toasted sandwiches sold for \$1.20. We have also included a plain salad sandwich (\$1.00) – to provide for those with little money.

**Haven't included freight **

General rule of thumb for setting prices is mark up of 25- 30%.

A few of the larger items, like Veggie burgers and hamburgers, make the least amount of profit, but as they are a good nutritional choice, and as we are making much more profit on other items, we found it to be acceptably justifiable.