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**MEDIA RELEASE**

15 June 2025

**Bundaberg preschoolers dig into garden dreams for national grants program**

Youngsters at YMCA Bundaberg Childcare and Kindergarten have been busy swapping paintbrushes for watering cans as they help design a new outdoor space with big vision – and even bigger learning opportunities.

Their dream sensory garden – affectionately known as the *Pickers’ Patch* – is Bundaberg’s local entry in **Healthy Harold’s Garden Grants 2025**, a national program from children’s health charity Life Ed in partnership with Bakers Delight and their Healthy Solutions range.

The initiative is aimed at growing healthy minds and bodies through hands-on learning in edible and sensory gardens.

Kindy assistant centre manager and early childhood teacher Louise McPherson said the children’s imagination and curiosity had flourished as the centre sketched out their plans for a natural play space that stimulates all five senses.

“The garden is already a great space that the children are going into each week: observing the changes happening with the seeds and seedlings currently growing,” Ms McPherson said.

“They’ve loved watching the flowers bloom, and it has sparked conversations about what else we might be able to grow. The grant would help us complete the project and create a space for children and families to explore, care for and be proud of.”

Unlike a traditional veggie patch, the Pickers’ Patch is designed as a fully immersive “garden-to-mouth” experience – where preschoolers can dig, lift, taste, smell and explore, while building social, physical and cognitive skills.

The project also supports the kindy’s focus on cultural connection through the 8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning, helping children learn through land and nature.

Life Ed Queensland CEO Taryn Black said the Bundaberg project reflects a national trend, with more schools and early learning centres embracing garden spaces as part of wellbeing education.

“Teachers are thinking outside the classroom and factoring outdoor projects into their programs,” Ms Black said.

“Garden projects teach nutrition while nurturing calm, connection and resilience. In a time when children’s mental health is under increasing pressure, these garden spaces give students a sense of peace, purpose and joy – and we believe that is worth nurturing.”

The Healthy Harold’s Garden Grants program runs from 3 to 24 June, with $25,000 in grants available for edible and sensory gardens, along with free curriculum resources. New categories have been added this year, giving even more schools a chance to share in the funding.

Bakers Delight Joint CEO Elise Gillespie said the bakery brand was proud to support the initiative for a second year.

“We know that early education about healthy eating and nourishing our bodies has a positive impact on kids, both mentally and physically,” Ms Gillespie said.

“We’re delighted to be supporting another 25 schools around Australia in bringing this hands-on educational experience to life.”

Bundaberg schools interested in applying can visit [**lifeed.org.au/gardengrants**](https://www.lifeed.org.au/gardengrants) for more information.

With preschoolers already elbow-deep in garden planning, the seeds of a brighter, healthier future are well and truly being sown in Bundaberg.

**ENDS**

[About Life Ed Queensland](https://www.lifeedqld.org.au/)

Life Ed Queensland is the largest provider of preventative health education, reaching more than 180,000 children annually through schools and preschools. With the help of mascot Healthy Harold the giraffe, and specialist educators, Life Ed delivers vital lessons on topics such as respectful relationships, nutrition, mental health, cyber safety, puberty, vaping and more.

[About Bakers Delight](https://www.bakersdelight.com.au/)

Fourth generation baker, Roger Gillespie and his wife Lesley, founded the company’s first bakery in 1980 in Hawthorn, Melbourne. Today, Bakers Delight remains in family hands under the leadership of Elise Gillespie and husband, David Christie and can be found in more than 700 locations across Australia, North America and New Zealand. That’s a lot of bread being baked fresh daily and delivered to a lot of happy customers.

**For media enquiries:**

Tracey Challenor

Media, Public Relations and Content Manager