

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Sonny takes top prize in Australia’s Healthier Lunchboxes Challenge**

A nutritious and creative lunchbox has earned Western Cape College Weipa student Sonny Brooks the title of Queensland’s winner in Australia’s Healthier Lunchboxes Challenge – an annual campaign delivered by children’s charity Life Ed in partnership with Woolworths.

Sonny’s Year 5 lunchbox, entered by his mum Elisa, wowed judges with its vibrant mix of fresh, wholesome ingredients, proving that healthy eating can be both fun and flavourful.

“Our entry was a true team effort,” Elisa said. “I asked Sonny if he wanted to do the challenge with me, and he was so excited when he found out he’d won.”

Living in Weipa on the Cape York Peninsula presents unique challenges when it comes to fresh food availability, but the Brooks family has embraced creative meal planning.

“Our main road usually closes off during the wet season, so we rely on the barge from Cairns. If the weather is bad, it gets delayed,” Elisa explained. “We always have frozen vegetables on hand, and we eat a lot of fish. Both the boys love their fishing.”

Variety is key in their lunchbox approach. “My husband has been making zucchini fritters and muffins for both dinner and school lunches – we get bored with sandwiches! At the moment, that’s their favourite,” Elisa said.

Juggling work and family life means preparation is essential. “As a shift worker, sometimes I’m making lunches after a 12-hour night shift, but I try to stay organised for the week.”

Sonny’s win highlights the importance of teaching children about nutrition from an early age, particularly in remote communities. His story is a testament to how small, everyday choices – like packing a balanced lunch – can have a big impact on health and wellbeing.

This year, 890 families participated in Australia’s Healthier Lunchboxes Challenge, with six lucky winners nationwide receiving a $1,000 Woolworths e-Gift card. Each winning child’s school also received a $2,000 Woolworths e-Gift card to support healthy eating initiatives.

Western Cape College is excited to use its prize to enhance the school tuckshop menu and is looking forward to welcoming the Life Ed Queensland program to the school in Term 2. During the visit, Woolworths will also provide fresh fruit as part of its Free Fruit for Kids program.

Woolworths is also a founding partner of the Life Ed Thrive Children’s Fund, established in 2021 to support children and schools in rural, remote and low socio-economic areas with vital health and safety education.

Life Ed Queensland CEO Michael Fawsitt said the lunchbox challenge was not only a fun way for parents and kids to bond, but it also built on Life Ed’s nutrition-focused modules and helped children understand the key role that food plays in staying healthy.

“Children learn best by doing, which is why hands-on initiatives like this are so powerful,” Mr Fawsitt said.

“It takes learning beyond the classroom, encouraging families to work together to embed healthy habits. What kids eat today impacts their health both now and in the future.”

Woolworths Head of Community and Sponsorships Sarah De La Mare said the standard of this year’s lunchbox entries had been inspiring.

“A nutritious lunch is essential for young people to help them thrive at school and at home,” Ms De La Mare.

“As Today’s Fresh Food People, we’re committed to making healthier easier for families and communities. Programs like Free Fruit for Kids, which has provided more than 160 million pieces of fruit to children in Australia and New Zealand, are just one way we support healthier lifestyles.”

**ENDS**

About Life Ed Queensland

Life Ed Queensland is the largest independent provider of preventative health education to school children.

With the help of its iconic mascot Healthy Harold the giraffe, and a team of specialist educators, Life Ed has been empowering children and young people to make safer and healthier choices for 45 years at a national level, and 38 years in Queensland.

We work with more than 800 schools and preschools across Queensland. On average, 180,000 school children participate in our program each year, with our 30 specialist educators.

Life Ed’s core program covers nutrition and exercise, drugs, smoking, vaping and alcohol, bullying, respectful relationships, and positive mental health.

Life Ed Queensland also delivers the largest puberty, relationships and sexual health education program in Queensland primary schools, Talk About It, which reached 49,014 students across the state in the past year.

<https://www.lifeedqld.org.au/>

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