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Free Fruit Friday would make NSW kids healthier

NSW should follow the Victorian government's lead and introduce 'Free Fruit Friday' to educate primary school children on healthy eating.

NSW Farmers' Association Horticulture Committee Chair Peter Darley says Victoria's move to give school students free fruit every Friday to help prevent obesity and diabetes is very positive, and would help create a lifetime love of fruit.

"Introducing fresh fruit at school educates children and their families about healthy eating. Supplying fresh fruit at school will be Australia's first step in the battle against the obesity and type 2 diabetes epidemics," Mr Darley said.

"Swapping one pre-packaged snack per day with a fresh apple or pear would have a substantial impact on the energy and overall health of Australian children.

"An apple has more fibre and half the kilojoules of the average muesli bar, whilst a pear is nutrient rich and offers the Low GI benefits of sustained energy," he said.

The Victorian government has invested \$11 million in the Free Fruit Friday program, which will be rolled out across the state in stages. Initially 35,000 kindergarten to grade two students at 300 schools will take part in the program.

The program will also support regional growers, with the schools encouraged to buy their Friday fruit locally.

"Young people need to be educated to ensure healthy lifestyles, but this type of program is also a good chance to show kids what is grown locally," Mr Darley concluded.

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Fast fact: Agriculture employs 122,000 in NSW