



Active Schools Success Story

Athol Road Primary School

Key Priority Area: Supportive School Environment

School Overview:	Over the past few years, the staff at Athol Road Primary School has worked diligently to transform the school into a professional learning community where improving student learning is at the core of every decision made. The school is part of a diverse, multi-cultural community where over 85% of the students speak a language other than English at home. A major challenge facing the school in recent times has been the decline of the whole school community in the engagement of physical activity both within and outside school hours.
Project Goal:	Athol Road Primary School's aim is to develop a whole school approach to increasing the active recreation and sport participation of students and their families. By connecting the whole school community with a sport they can enjoy at home and at school, the installation of outdoor table tennis tables prioritised the building of social skills and active play.

With Table Tennis being a widely popular sport amongst the Athol Road Primary School (ARPS) community, an Olympian Table Tennis Player was invited to speak with students at a general assembly about his journey to representing Australia. This generated significant student interest and enthusiasm for the sport which led to the purchase of several table tennis tables for use indoors during the cooler months, and outdoors when the weather was more favourable. While there was a high level of take up in playing once the tables arrived, there were limitations with their use due to supervision requirements indoors. Recognising this, a group of students investigated the option of outdoor, weather-resistant table tennis tables which could be used all year round. They presented their research information to the Principal and asked that she consider the purchase of a number of outdoor table tennis tables which would provide unlimited recreational opportunities.



The Active Schools Grant enabled the purchase and delivery of 3 brightly coloured, robust, weather-resistant tables that were positioned strategically around the school. A school Table Tennis Club has since been formed, with membership



offering the privilege of playing at recess and lunchtime. In return, the members share the cleaning of the tables and the monitoring of equipment, ensuring they are ready for use each day. The truly wide reaching impact of these tables was evident at the inaugural ARPS [The Fathering Project](#) event that brought the Year 3/4 dads and their children together for a *Ping Pong and Pizza Night*. Many of the 90 fathers and children who attended were seen queuing to play table tennis. For many of the dads it was their first time on site at the school. For the teachers it was an opportunity to meet the dads for the first time; and for the children, it was a chance to spend quality time with their fathers whilst playing games, being active and sharing their pride in their school.

Active School Strategy	Impact
Environment: Improve the outdoor spaces available to students to be active by installing 3 new outdoor table tennis tables with suitable equipment that can be used before school, recess, lunchtimes and integrated into PE lessons.	<i>Almost every student in the school has had at least one opportunity during recess or lunch where they have had sole use of the tables. Many students are lining up to play every day. The tables are now used every day at recess and lunchtime since the Table tennis Club has been formed.</i>
Program Delivery: Support students and the wider school community to engage in active recreation and playing table tennis by providing table tennis focused events and opportunities to play.	<i>The Year 3/4 students were a bit sporadic in their use of the tables but this has improved significantly since The Fathering Project event. The Year 1/2 staff have noticed students "coaching" each other, taking turns, playing fairly and demonstrating teamwork. Concepts of fair play and consideration of others are on display as students regularly rotate on and off the tables to ensure everybody has a turn.</i>