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It's a Fun-gi Phenomenom

The next instalment of Hort Innovation's Phenomenom phenomenon is here.

Stage two of this research project launches an eight-part podcast titled "Nomcast", 10-minute audio episodes packed full of information and cool facts about food in the context of health, sustainability, science, history and technology.

Alongside the podcast series, a new web-episode focused on onions and mushrooms, featuring maths whiz Eddie Woo, has also been launched, as well as updated teacher resources and a helpful teacher guidebook.

The initial research project brought a comprehensive collection of free resources to educators nationally and around the world through web videos and complementary curriculum-aligned lesson plans that help to inform and educate primary school children about the importance of, and the science behind vegetables.

Since it was launched 12 months ago, the program has been adopted into 3000 schools across the country, it has been an inflight feature presentation on Qantas airlines, and it has won accolades both internationally and in Australia.

Hort Innovation Research and Development Manager for Nutrition and Food Safety, Jemma O'Hanlon, said this project was actively helping to find solutions to improve children's interest in vegetables which would in turn, grow consumption.

"We know from recent statistics that only five per cent of kids are getting their recommended daily intake of vegetables. But this isn't a new problem," she said.

"For decades we have worked with industry, researchers, educators, health professionals and the community to assess how we can support the next generation to get enough of the good stuff to counter growing health issues related to child obesity and nutrition. The research has consistently pointed to early intervention.

"This innovative approach to how we look at food education has the ultimate goal of increasing vegetable intake by Australian children which will in turn support our fresh produce farmers. Supporting happy and healthy children is something we can all be proud of."

Phenomenom's creator, food personality and former teacher Alice Zaslavsky, said her experience working in education and food media inspired her to develop new ways of engaging students to take an interest in their well-being and the provenance of their food.

"Phenomenom has been extremely well received by teachers, students and parents alike, and I believe these new resources are our best yet," she said. "Phenomenom helps support a shift in societal attitudes towards vegetables - and education - propelled forward by the kids themselves and that is part of what makes this project so exciting.

The 26 webisodes, podcast, teacher guidebook and a growing bank of Australian curriculum-aligned lesson plans are all freely available on Phenomenom's interactive website: phenomenom.com.au

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