

Forum gives tips for healthy farmers



Joy Ward of Ellinbank (left) and Glenis Parkin of Thorpdale discuss common issues during the Sustainable Farm Families program.

More than 28 West Gippsland farmers attended the "Sustainable Farm Families" program conducted in Traralgon last week.

The program is designed to encourage farmers and their families to look after their health.

Over the two days of the program, health professionals covered topics including stress, heart disease, cancer, nutrition, farm health and safety and men's and women's health.

Participants also had

the opportunity to have their blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels checked, as well as height and weight and hip and waist ratios.

Some farmers were encouraged to consult their doctor following the results.

A particular highlight was a tour of the local supermarket where participants took a great interest in studying the nutrition labels of food packaging to evaluate fat, fibre, salt and sugar content.

West Gippsland Healthcare Group community health nurse Alison Hescock, said, "it is very encouraging to see farmers wanting to learn more about how they can look after themselves."

"The message is simple. Farmers should have regular check ups with their doctor, take a break or enjoy a holiday, have a good laugh, but more importantly to communicate and express how they feel", she said.

"All of these aspects will help reduce the effects of stress in tough times."

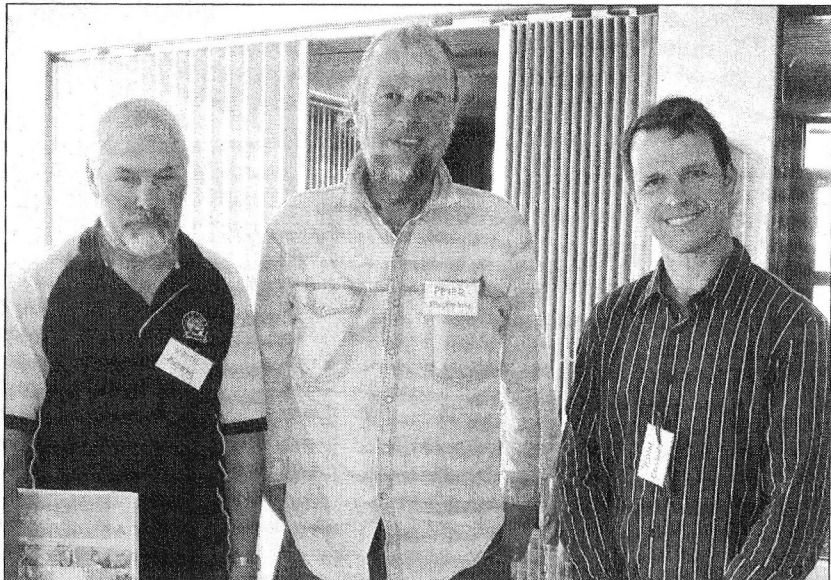
The sustainable farm families project is an initiative of the Western District Health Service. Funding for the Traralgon program was provided by the Human Services Department.

Further programs are

planned for the Baw Baw Shire. If you would like further information, phone Alison Hescock (5624 3500).



Sustainable Farm Families program presenter and community health nurse Alison Hescock (right) chats with Karen Low of Traralgon South.



Chatting during a break in the Sustainable Farm Families program are from left: Keith Pickering (Thorpdale), Peter MacFarlane (Hazelwood) and John Castello (Thorpdale).