

Workshops target health



WARRACKNABEAL agronomist and farmer Andrew 'Jack' Daniel had never thought much about his health until attending a Sustainable Farm Families workshop at Warracknabeal.

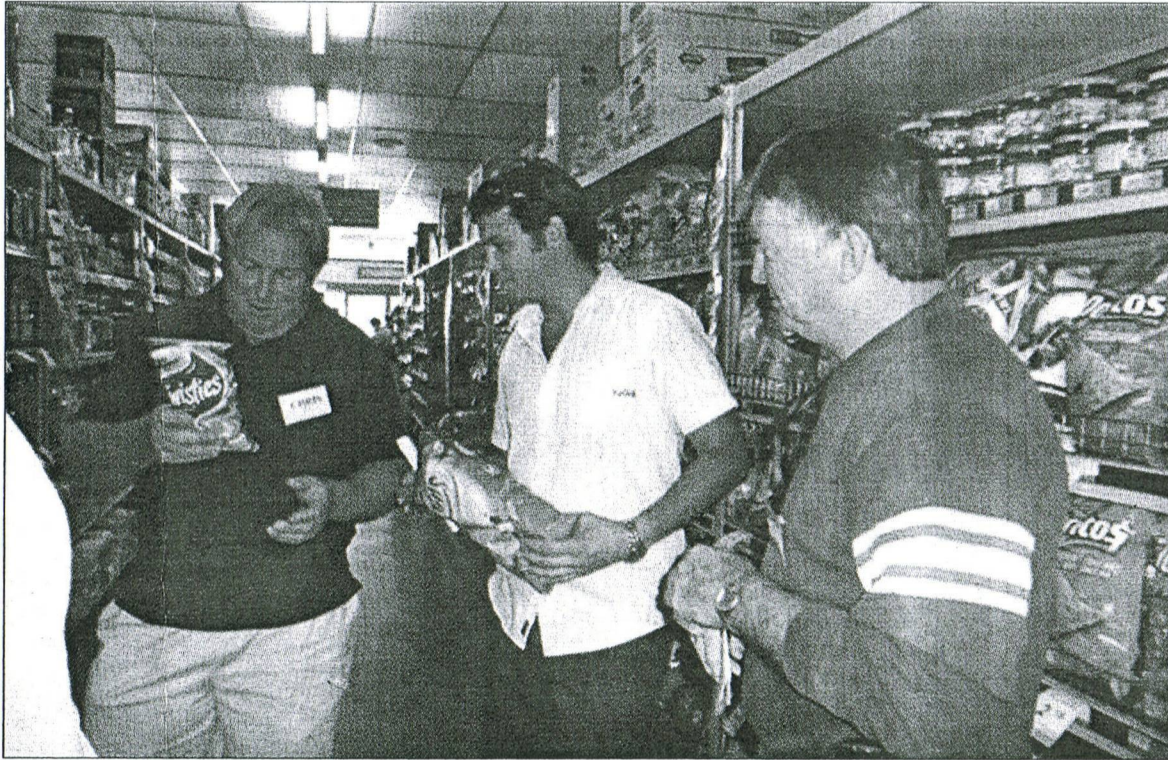
"I had never attended anything like this before and it really got me thinking about looking after your health," he said.

"The thing the presenters drove home was that your health is the best asset you have. And they are right. You can't live right and you can't work right unless you are healthy."

Mr Daniel said it was only an invitation from a Warracknabeal VFF member that prompted him to attend the two-day workshop at Warracknabeal Community Centre.

"He approached me, and then he approached my wife Kirsty, who also encouraged me to attend. If I had received a flyer in the mail I probably wouldn't have gone," he said.

But Mr Daniel is pleased that he did.



LEARNING TOGETHER: Western District Health Service nurse Adam Taylor teaches Warracknabeal district farmers Chris Hewitt and Rod Schulz how to read food labels. Picture: CONTRIBUTED

He said participants fasted the night before the workshop's first day and underwent health checks. Nurses checked blood sugar levels, cholesterol, blood pressure and body mass index levels.

Mr Daniel said the workshop was informative, with lots of dialogue between presenters and participants.

He said a supermarket tour was an eye-opener for him. The tour showed participants how to check fat and sugar contents of foods.

During the workshop men and women split into separate groups to discuss health issues.

Mr Daniel said the men's discussion was well done with prostate cancer

among the health issues discussed, as was the importance of learning disease symptoms and not ignoring them, especially blemishes or spots on people who spend a lot of time working outside.

He was so impressed with the workshop that he is recommending it to his clients. Mr Daniel would also

like to see the program extended beyond farmers to other sections of the community.

Rural Northwest Health hosted the Warracknabeal workshop, with help from Western District Health Service which developed the program in 2004, Darryl Pearl from the Department of Primary Industries and support from the VFF's Warracknabeal branch.

The Sustainable Farm Families program is designed to explore links between farming family health, farm-related accidents and farm sustainability.

The project also provides a health education program to help farmers and farming families identify strategies to enhance individual and family health.

Sustainable Farm Families workshops are also running at Natimuk today; at Balmoral on March 27 and 28 — telephone Diane McLean at Balmoral Bush Nursing Centre on 5570 1304 or John Dundon from Balmoral Pastoral and Agricultural Society on 5575 6257; and at Hopetoun on April 9 and 10 — phone Julie Mills from Rural Northwest Health on 5396 1223 or Heather Drendel from Landcare on 5083 2205 or 0427 868 705.

● This column is the initiative of Wimmera Primary Care Partnership to provide helpful information to Wimmera people and will return to its regular Wednesday edition spot next week.