



John Della Bosca, Special Minister of State, left, enjoying the NAIDOC Family Day with local bikies.



Smoking ceremony at the NAIDOC Family Day.



Face-painting at MAD-TIME

One of the presenters commented that they didn't have a chance to complete their prepared talk because the group had so many questions they wanted answered.

GIRLS CAMP

The Girls camp was for young women and girls aged 7 to 16 years. Around 30 girls attended, participating in a mix of recreation activities, talks and group work. Some of the participants were referred from government agencies, others came after seeing posters in local courts and Aboriginal services offices.

Topics included family support, sexual health, drugs and alcohol, child protection and Aboriginal services. Some of the speakers stayed at the camp to allow the participants to discuss the issues raised and seek further advice. The MAD mums facilitated various discussions about the issues throughout the weekend. After the



Mums Camp

camps several girls sought out further support from the project co-ordinator.

THE MEN AND BOYS COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT CAMPS

Three-day camps for men and boys called Drug and Alcohol Community Empowerment Camps were organised by Black on Track. Discussion at the camps covered issues including drugs and alcohol, mental health, anger management and grief and loss. They also discussed Aboriginal history, culture and identity and positive role models.

NAIDOC FAMILY DAY

The final gathering attracted over a thousand people to a drug and alcohol free family day. A wide range of fun and cultural activities were enjoyed by the many people who attended.



Girls Camp

MAD TIME

Following the gathering project, it was clear that young people needed regular activities and access for ongoing support and information. MADTIME was developed by the MAD Mums to engage young people in regular drug and alcohol free activities and provide access to information from local agencies. MAD Mums created a regular weekly programme of after school activities for 5 to 16 year olds at the Bolton Point Community Hall.

There were many supporters of the MAD Mums, including the Hunter Volunteer Centre, Department of Community Services, Department of Housing, Department of Family and Community Services, and the Quigley Co-Op.

MENTORING FOR BRIGHTER FUTURES

After three young people were killed in a paddock-bashing joyride following a binge drinking party in 2002, the small north coast town of Kyogle was deeply affected.



Presenter Geraldine Doogue with Melita Luck at the teenage partying forum in Kyogle.

In the weeks that followed, the Kyogle CDAT organised a community forum about teenage partying to prevent the likelihood of such a tragedy ever happening again.

Melita Luck, chair of the Kyogle CDAT, explained; "We had never before persuaded anyone to participate in a forum because in the country everyone knows one another and no-one wants to admit that there is a problem. Therefore, it is very difficult to get people to talk in front of each other. We decided to have a hypothetical discussion. We wanted to get all community leaders on stage and we realised that we would have to get a famous person on stage with them or no-one would contribute.

"So I wrote an email to Geraldine Doogue. It was like a lottery; she told me that she receives thousands of similar emails. However, she replied to my invitation and

agreed to come to Kyogle. She chaired a talkback discussion and was absolutely wonderful. All the ferals and rednecks were sitting next to each other, with their differing views on this problem.

"I had been concerned how the hypothetical would be received by the community after the recent deaths. The community's wounds were still very raw and I was concerned that the issues surrounding drink driving may have been a little too sensitive, but the community supported the event wholeheartedly, with around 300 locals turning up on a rainy midweek evening. We were really pleased with the outcome," said Melita.

"From the forum it was apparent that young people in Kyogle did not have enough to do. There was an absence of male role models for boys, a lack of positive risk-taking



adventures and no responsible older young people to guide the young ones.”

Since the forum the main focus for Kyogle CDAT has been Kyogle Youth Ventures, which was born from all the ideas that flowed from both the forum and a subsequent “community brainstorming” session.

Each year since the forum it has sent a group of teenagers (year 10 and above) to the Edmund Rice training camp near Sydney, where they get training in how to mentor young ones. When they return they in turn take a group of 9 to 12 year olds to Mebbin Camp, where they apply the Edmund Rice training, whilst abseiling, canoeing, trekking and playing many creative games.

For the following year each teenage group continues to mentor the younger ones. Monthly adventures such as camping and fishing maintain the bonds formed.

Parents of all the young people involved have reported much improvement in their children’s confidence, self-esteem and capacity to care for themselves and others.

The program is managed through the local youth centre, Kyogle Youth Action, which keeps close connections with local primary and high schools to identify which children are likely to benefit most from involvement.

Steve Kitchener, youth worker for Kyogle Youth Action, says the benefits continue on into the transition into high school.

“When the young ones in the program begin high school, they already know older kids at the school, which gives them more confidence and connection than would otherwise be the case.

“With this approach we are identifying kids at risk a lot earlier, and able to intervene in a very positive way before they become known

to the local courts,” he said.

“By sending groups of fresh teenagers every year to train as mentors and make buddies of younger ones, we hope to provide a constant source of encouragement and guidance among the young people of Kyogle. Now, after three years of the program, the ‘young ones’ are already becoming youth leaders themselves as the founding leaders now explore university life, overseas travel and enter the workforce.

“If Kyogle can create a generation of stalwart young adults whose values keep the temptations of destructive life-choices at bay and who positively influence their juniors, we can expect less drug related accidents, vandalism and other desperate acts to occur. Instead we could add to a happy, employable young generation within our town, as well as going out into the world,” said Steve.



Youth mentors apply their training at Mebbin Camp.

Young people learn to pitch tents and join in team building games.



PICK A PATH

Following two surveys conducted by Inverell CDAT in 2001 and 2005, as well as the *Alcohol Action in Rural Communities Research Project*, it was evident that risky and binge drinking was an issue in the local area.

A camp experience, *Pick a Path*, was organised by Inverell CDAT to provide options for at-risk young women aged 14 to 16 years, some of whom were in foster care. Places on the camp were offered to six girls, each of whom had a family history of drug or alcohol misuse.

The girls all saddled up and ready to ride. Supervisors far right Renata de la Croix (TIGYS) and centre Jeanette Griffiths (IFYSS).



Camp supervisor and Inverell CDAT member Jeanette Griffiths explained that horse riding was a large part of the daytime activities, to build confidence and to enjoy learning new skills.

“Sitting down for some morning tea when we first arrived sharing some of ourselves with all the girls we learned two of the girls had never been near a horse. It became quite clear when they wouldn’t go through the gate to the horse yards they were actually terrified of them too.

“After their initial apprehension was overcome, all four of the girls who attended turned out to be wonderful young riders and a pleasure to ride with. They really took to their horses and bonded with them from the first minute.

“Later in the evening we all watched the *Brink DVD* and while playing the quiz they all displayed a remarkable insight into alcohol and shared a few stories of things they had seen or thought of binge drinking. We later played the *Big Night Out Game* and I must admit we all had fun playing.

“The next morning after brekkie we went for another lovely ride. With aching bums and legs we ate lunch and thanked our hosts for a lovely time before heading off home to Inverell. We were able to share with these girls the dangers and side effects of drug and alcohol use while also making two new horse lovers in the world. I think that those two things can enrich anyone’s life.

“With the help of various local partner organisations we were able to provide the

girls with a Drug and Alcohol Resource Kit. They left the camp not only with a greater knowledge of drugs and alcohol and some ideas for alternatives, but also with a greater knowledge of the services available to them in the Inverell area.”

Pick a Path was supported by Inverell Family & Youth Support Services (IFYSS), Tenterfield Inverell Glen Innes Youth Service (TIGYS), Joblink Plus, Hunter New England Area Health, The Linking Together Centre and the NSW Department of Community Services.

DRUG INFO @YOUR LIBRARY

Community Drug Action Teams across the state have enthusiastically supported the launch of the new *drug info @ your library* program.

Sue Walden, Health Co-ordinator for the State Library, says this important resource was developed in response to community needs, and is designed to provide relevant drug and alcohol information for the community, focusing on the needs of secondary and TAFE students, and parents and carers of young people.

“Our research showed they wanted access to both reference and lending books, with up-to-date and easy-to-read drug and alcohol information as well as pamphlets to take away,” she said.

The collection is presented in attractive stands, with content updated twice a year. New titles are added based on feedback from the libraries.

“For example, we have recently added more personal stories about drug issues to the collection, in response to the popularity of these titles,” said Sue.

The full *drug info @ your library* collection is available at all of the 98 central libraries. In addition all 362 public libraries across NSW have an extensive booklet collection as well as free pamphlets. The printed collection is supplemented by comprehensive information on the website www.druginfo.sl.nsw.gov.au

drug info @ your library is a joint project of the NSW State Library and NSW Health.

Some of the resources in the *druginfo@yourlibrary* collection.



Lake Macquarie CDAT members Jeanette Suttie OAM and Judy Griffiths at the Toronto Library launch.



Kingsgrove North High School students with Linda Burnie MP, at the launch of *druginfo@yourlibrary* at Campsie Library.



COMMUNITY DRUG STRATEGIES



WHAT IS THE DRUGS AND COMMUNITY ACTION STRATEGY?

The Drugs and Community Action Strategy (DCAS) is part of the NSW Government Plan of Action, arising from the NSW Drug Summit 1999.

Participants in the Drug Summit recognised the need for government and communities to work together to solve the problems associated with illicit drug use. Responding to alcohol misuse has also become an important part of the program.

Project Officers are employed across the State to work with communities to identify drug-related concerns and help improve the way everyone responds to them. As part of this work, they help establish and support Community Drug Action Teams.

In August 2005, management of the program moved from NSW Premier's Department to the NSW Health Department and it is now part of the Mental Health Drug & Alcohol Office.

Local Project Officers cover NSW across the following regions:

- Central Coast / Hunter
- Coastal Sydney
- Illawarra / South East NSW
- New England / North West NSW
- North Coast
- Riverina / Murray
- South Western / Western Sydney
- Western NSW



WHAT IS A COMMUNITY DRUG ACTION TEAM?

A Community Drug Action Team (CDAT) is a group of people working together to take action on drug and alcohol related concerns in their community.

CDATs are usually made up of community members, including parents and young people, representatives of youth and community organisations, local councils, chambers of commerce and Government agencies, in particular health, schools, police and community services.

There are currently 80 CDATs across NSW. If you would like to know more about which CDATs are in your area, or are interested in establishing a CDAT in your area please contact Community Drug Strategies, Mental Health Drug & Alcohol Office – NSW Health on 02 9391 9000.

PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR CDATS

The *Grants and Capacity Building Program* supports the work of CDATs through the provision of small grants for projects, as well as training and development opportunities.

Project grants are available to CDATs to assist with running specific projects such as those profiled in this booklet. Administrative support funds are also available to assist CDATs cover running costs for stationery, venue hire and postage.

CDATs also receive enormous support from their local communities, and obtain additional funds and assistance from a variety of government and non-government agencies. There are many examples of such partnerships outlined in this publication.

Funding for CDATs is made available every year, for further details and application forms please contact your local Project Officer.

Relevant training courses are also offered to CDAT members, to assist in building their capacity to work effectively in their communities. Recent courses have included Leadership Training, Working With the Media, and Consulting with Young People.

Regional conferences and meetings are also held regularly, and are highly valued by CDAT members for the networking and learning opportunities they provide. For more information on training and workshops scheduled for your area contact Community Drug Strategies, NSW Health.