

Drug Action



SUMMER 2003

ISSN 1445-0097

NSW COMMUNITY DRUG STRATEGIES NEWSLETTER

Posters target pot use Youth cannabis use awareness campaign

Throughout January, cinemas and shopping centres across NSW displayed a series of posters with messages about the potential problems of cannabis use by young people.

The posters, produced by the Community Drug Information Strategy (CDIS), present social situations – images of young people at a party, playing sport and at the school formal – and show the ways that cannabis can impact on friendships and other relationships, fitness and mental health.

“Many young people mistakenly view cannabis as a *healthy* drug; a drug without consequences. They need to know that’s not the case – there are risks associated with their actions,” said NSW Special Minister of State, John Della Bosca.

The messages use young people’s stories, in their language, reflecting their experiences. It is hoped that the messages will ring a bell

for young people, raise their awareness and encourage them to consider the social and other effects of cannabis.

The posters were located in toilet facilities in venues chosen for their popularity with young people e.g. cinemas and shopping centres.

The posters have also been made available to all high schools in NSW, so they will have a greater reach into places where young people will see them.

The campaign was developed in response to significant research into the use and effects of the drug. In Australia, more than a third of 14-19 year olds have used cannabis.

Jonathan Nicholas from Reach Out! and the Government’s Expert Advisory Group on Drugs said, “One of the worrying things about cannabis is that some people may perceive that it is harmless. The cool thing about this campaign is that it is realistic about the



effects of cannabis, particularly the social effects, which are not often talked about.”

The poster messages will be reinforced later in 2003 through advertising on youth radio stations across NSW.

For copies of the posters to display in your local community, contact the Project Manager in your area.



Anna Jordan, Aimee da Rosa, Nareeda Endacott and Alyssa Yeo of YEDJ. Photo courtesy of the Mudgee Guardian.

Mudgee song winners

Winners of the **Mudgee Drug Action Team (MDAT) Song Writing and Performance Competition** were presented with their awards by Special Minister of State John Della Bosca, at a celebration concert on 7 February 2003 at Mudgee PCYC.

The competition was open to young people in the Mudgee Shire with all entrants addressing drug and alcohol issues in some way. Originally the competition only had a song writing section but MDAT was inundated with entries where the writers wanted to perform their own work.

Elizabeth Martens won the senior song writing award with her song, ‘Mirror’. Elizabeth wrote the song to express her feelings about a family member who had become involved with drugs. The senior performance award was won by ‘Scintilla’ (Matthew Matzierus). The junior song writing award was won by Stephanie Small with her song ‘Escape’ and the junior performance award by YEDJ (see picture) who recorded their performance as a video clip.

Local radio station Real FM recorded all the winners’ songs and broadcast a special feature on 24 January 2003.

Happy New Year and welcome to the Summer 2003 edition of Drug Action. In this edition we read about some of the highly successful regional conferences that CDATs have been organising (see opposite) and profile a recent NSW Government campaign about the potential problems of cannabis use by young people (see front page).

National Youth Week (5-13 April 2003) and Drug Action Week (23-28 June 2003) are just around the corner. Both weeks provide CDATs with excellent opportunities to raise awareness of drug-related issues in their communities.

In the last 12 months you may have noticed a few changes in the names and faces of the DCAS Project Managers. Lizzie Mulder (Project Manager, New England/North West) left in September and Peter Connie (Project Manager, South-Western and Western Sydney) left at the end of last year. Both were instrumental in the development and progress of the Strategy in their respective regions. On behalf of their colleagues and myself I thank Lizzie and Peter for all their hard work.

New Project Managers with backgrounds in local and Commonwealth government, community-based services and the arts have added to the diversity of experience of the Team (names and contact details on the back page).

Yvonne Korn
Project Director,
Community Drug Strategies

Coming together CDAT REGIONAL

Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs) across NSW have been meeting and celebrating their achievements at regional conferences.

The conferences provided wonderful opportunities for teams in the same region to meet face-to-face (often for the first time) and discuss drug-related issues, their impacts and responses across their region.

Some of the recent regional gatherings include:

Representatives from across **Western NSW** came together in Dubbo to share strategies, hear guest speakers and network with other teams in the region.



Susan Gibbs, Brewarrina Aboriginal Medical Service, Warren Minniecon, Community Facilitator Bourke and Charlie McHughes, Brewarrina Aboriginal Medical Service at the Western NSW Regional Conference in Dubbo.

53 CDAT members from Lithgow, Bathurst, Orange, Mudgee, Dubbo, Far West (Broken Hill), Cobar, Forbes, Walgett, Bourke, Brewarrina and Condobolin attended the conference.

Speakers included Dr John Howard who spoke about resilience and young people, Dr Rod MacQueen who presented about treatment options, and Dr Judy Atkinson and Chris Edwards who ran a workshop concerning transgenerational trauma and Indigenous alcohol and other drug issues.

Dubbo CDAT Chairperson, Mark Xuerub said he enjoyed seeing what other teams were doing as well as showcasing the projects he and his team had implemented.

All eight **North Coast** CDATs were involved in the two-day conference in Coffs Harbour in November 2002.

Delegates heard from guest speakers Dr John Howard of the Ted Noffs Foundation and Paul Dillon of the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), as well as from local experts including John Leary, Mid North Coast Area Health Service and David Reilly, Northern Rivers Area Health Service.

A thought-provoking panel session considered hypothetical drug scenarios of "Numberate", a radical pain killing breakthrough, and "Reagra", a neuro-enhancer for sexual dysfunction with anti-aging properties. Panel members from the police, Hemp Embassy, media, health, education and clergy together

CDATs working with councils for Youth Week

Youth Week is run by young people for young people. It is an opportunity for young people to show off their talents, have their say and organise youth activities. Local councils assist their young people by providing funds and advice on running successful events. In some areas CDATs have been actively involved in helping stage Youth Week events, providing both financial and hands-on assistance.

Kyogle

Last year, Kyogle held a *Health and Well Being Forum*, which was taken on the

road to a range of schools in the Kyogle area. The forum gave constructive and helpful information on alcohol and drug use. The CDAT provided information for this forum.

This year, following a tragic car accident that took the lives of three young men, Kyogle CDAT and Kyogle Council are now working together to make under-age drinking a key focus. They are hoping to stage events during Youth Week that will help the town deal with the loss of these lives as well as educate young people on the dangers of under-age drinking and driving.

with a parent and young person reminded the audience of the diverse attitudes to drugs in our community. The hypothetical was an excellent way to explore both the commonality and the conflict in our individual and institutional values and how this influences community responses to drug issues.

Wagga Wagga CDAT hosted the **Riverina/Murray** Regional CDAT Conference on 13 November 2002.

Guest speaker Tony Trimmingham from Family Drug Support told the conference about his experiences. Tony started Family Drug Support after receiving many phone calls from families suffering the impact of drugs after he went public about the death of his son Damien from a heroin overdose.

Workshops were held examining ways to involve young people in CDAT activities, how to engage the media and how to improve the way organisations work with aboriginal communities.

The Wagga Wagga CDAT organised a Community Forum for the general community to hear Tony Trimmingham's story. Tony also presented to over 400 Wagga Wagga High School students.

Conferences were also held in the Central Coast/Hunter, New England North West, Illawarra/South East and Coastal Sydney regions over the past 12 months (covered in previous editions).

Week – 5 to 13 April 2003

Sue Coulston of Kyogle Council explained, "For the first time we are seeing young people acknowledging the devastation something like this tragic car accident has on their lives.

They are starting to think about the impact risks have on family and friends and not just the victims," said Sue.

For further information on Youth Week in NSW visit the Youth Week website at www.youthweek.nsw.gov.au or contact Roslyn Harrison, Youth Week Coordinator on tel (02) 9228-3736 or at roslyn.harrison@premiers.nsw.gov.au

Action Around the State



Lao community drug consultation in Cabramatta.

Local communities involved in Family Drug Education

The Premier's Department is working with local agencies and community advisory groups in the Cabramatta area of South Western Sydney, to produce drug education and information appropriate for the Vietnamese, Khmer, Lao and Chinese communities.

Each community is using a number of ways to involve parents and to get messages across – such as radio programs, newspaper articles, parent information seminars and audio-tapes.

Fairfield City Council's Library has expanded their library collection to include drug and alcohol information in the Vietnamese, Khmer, Lao and Chinese languages.

For more information about this program contact Cathy Noble, Cabramatta Project on (02) 9724 7811.

On 20 October 2002, the **Bathurst CDAT** held a *Community Sport and Recreation Day* to provide young people in the Kelso area of Bathurst with an opportunity to learn some valuable skills, come together as a community and have fun and access information on health services and other services in the area. Aboriginal sporting personalities spoke about positive lifestyle choices, community participation, playing sport and having fun.

During December 2002 the **Foster/Tuncurry CDAT** launched an under-age drinking awareness campaign. "Are You Responsible" is being conducted by the CDAT, with the support of the Great Lakes Council, the Manning Great Lakes Local Area Police Command and many clubs, businesses and individuals. "Are You Responsible" encourages the community to think about their level of responsibility in relation to young people and alcohol, who is supplying the alcohol and the problems it causes. The campaign will run throughout the summer months.



Foster/Tuncurry CDAT members with information and give-aways.

YOUNG WOMEN & ALCOHOL PROJECT

The Young Women & Alcohol Project is a peer education program currently being run by Western Sydney Drug & Alcohol Resource Centre (WESDARC) and funded by the NSW Health, Drug Programs Bureau.

The year-long Project, which began last June, has three stages. The first stage involved the recruitment of young women, who participated in a two-day camp and were trained in alcohol issues, allowing them to explore their own relationship to alcohol.

The second stage of the Project is now underway and includes a range of activities, from the personal to community-level activities eg. screen printing t-shirts with a design and logo developed by the young women.

In the last stage of the Project, the young women will produce a quality magazine for distribution throughout the Blue Mountains community.

Sue Fick is the Program Manager and Chrissie is one of the program participants. Both took time out recently to interview each other and discover how this innovative Project has affected each of them.

Sue asks Chrissie...

What made you get involved in YWA in the first place?

The promise of free pizza (ha ha). And the people I knew who were involved. Then I got more involved in things as I saw where it was going. The turning point came at the camp. One of the other participants on the camp was someone I considered a good friend. Through the group discussions, I realised I hardly knew her and that she'd really been more of a drinking buddy.

How did that realisation change your behaviour after camp?

I decided to experiment with "sobriety" and experiment with doing stuff I would normally do, but do it sober, like sitting in a park just chatting with friends.

How was it different?

Besides not having a hangover in the morning, it was good because, at the end of the night, I could think about the events of the night, or the highlights of the conversation, and remember them! I was, therefore, able to learn from them.

Do you still drink alcohol – has your experience of that changed?

Yes – it's more of a social thing now, more like kicking back and relaxing rather than getting "off my chops". I watch how much I've had and what I'm doing and stick to standard drinks – stuff I've learnt from the project.

Has this affected your friendships?

Some have gone down – we don't share the same common interests anymore – now I'm not binge drinking. They're still the same people and I love them but I've got other priorities. It's hard to prioritise and binge drink.

Do you think that some of the changes you've described would have happened anyway, as part of maturing?

It's a timing thing. The process had started, I just needed the push. It was hard to let go of the anarchy within myself. That stuff isn't fun for me anymore – I just wish it was.

Now that the pizza budget has run out, what's keeping you hanging in with the project?

Seeing it through. We've put in so much time and effort and I'm attached to the idea of producing something. And besides I want my fifteen minutes of fame!

Chrissie asks Sue...

What was your vision for the success of this project?

That participants would experience changes in their own behaviour with alcohol through the training we provided and that they would then influence people who probably weren't being reached by youth workers and other adults. I think that peer education is one of the most effective ways to change

behaviour. I guess I'm saying that active participation from the group will be a measure of success because it will have a huge reach. The thoughts and experiences of this group will make their way into a magazine that will have an extensive distribution amongst young people.

How has the notion of 'influence' worked within the group?

It's been an opportunity to watch each other change or not change, make choices, and have this issue of choices around drug and alcohol use on the front-burner. Normally this stuff is just happening and behaviour is not a result of conscious choice – through this program it is.

Do you have any highlights so far?

Yes, watching one of the young women on the high ropes at the camp will be forever etched in my mind. She was terrified, half angry, half crying and yet still putting one foot in front of the other. The dramatic impact of the ropes was palpable. Her bravado gave way to real courage and a lovely softness emerged. I was so struck by her courage – it was a perfect metaphor for change – that you can be terrified and yet making progress at the same time.

The Blue Mountains Drug Action Forum is a co-partner of this project.

Drug Action Editorial Committee

Kate Toohey, *Blue Mountains CDAT*

Bruce Dyer-Steel, *Hastings CDAT*

Jenyfer Rozensteins,
Redfern/Waterloo CDAT

Peter Ryan, *Orange CDAT*

Anjali Boronowskis, *DCAS Project Manager, Central Coast/Hunter*

Lisa Simone, *DCAS Project Manager, Illawarra/South East*

Liz Junck, *DCAS Project Manager, Statewide Issues*

Amanda Pullinger, *Community Drug Information Strategy Project Manager*

Surry Hills – A Dynamic CDAT

The Surry Hills Community Drug Action Team (CDAT) was formed around 15 months ago. Its initiation was largely due to some of the local service providers in Surry Hills responding to the concerns of some local residents in relation to discarded syringes. As Surry Hills is an area that is currently undergoing rapid growth, an education and information sharing strategy needed to be put in place to help create a sense of a safer community.

Historically, Surry Hills has accommodated a large number of service providers catering for a range of marginalised groups, including homeless and transient populations. Surry Hills has a diverse population of varying socio-economic status, which is demonstrated by the high real estate valuations and a fairly large proportion of public housing stock.

At our inaugural meeting, a number of issues were highlighted as needing attention. Our first campaign was an information card titled "Safety in Surry Hills". The objective of this campaign was to raise awareness and enhance community safety in the area. At the same time the resource provided useful contact numbers and information about discarded syringes. The card was distributed via a mail drop through Australia Post to all residents and businesses in the Surry Hill area, totalling over 8,000 addresses. The Department of Housing is now also including this information card in all new resident sign up kits for the local area.

We spent some time developing a drug action plan for our CDAT from the issues that were initially raised as concerns. The plan has a strong

community focus. The CDAT regularly participates in community events, such as the provision of an information stall at the Surry Hills Fair Day and being a part of local homelessness/agency forums.

In order to provide residents in public housing access to the CDAT we negotiated with the committee of a local public housing estate to hold every second CDAT meeting on the estate.

This also supported local policing strategies and a campaign by our Local State Member of Parliament to provide a dedicated housing worker for the housing estate.

We are currently undertaking a Drug Rape project called "Watch Yourself, Watch your friends". It was brought to the CDAT's attention that there was an increasing incidence of 'drug rape' occurring within the area.

The Police Local Area Command (LAC) had access to campaign resources that had recently been run in the ACT by the Federal Police. The campaign had evaluated successfully in raising awareness and educating young people in relation to the issues. It was decided to seek funding to re-brand this campaign and run it collaboratively across other CDAT's as well. CDAT representatives approached other local CDATs, namely Kings Cross and Glebe.

One of the best aspects that I personally find rewarding in being a part of this

SAFETY in SURRY HILLS
Community safety and awareness

USEFUL NUMBERS

Ambulance, Fire, Police
000 (24 hours) URGENT

Police Assistance Line
131 141 (Non-urgent crime)

Surry Hills Police
9265 4144

Needle Clean Up Hotline
1800 633 353

NSW HIV Information Line
9332 9700

Alcohol & Drug
Information Service
(24 hours)
9361 8000

ActNow NSW GOVERNMENT AND YOU
Taking a stand against drugs

"An Initiative of Surry Hills Community Drug Action Team (CDAT)"
P O Box 813, Surry Hills NSW 2010

Safety in Surry Hills card.

CDAT is the spirit of collaboration and sense of community that all participants bring to the table. Members bring a mutual respect and understanding of each other's roles (both personal and professional) within the community. This makes our meetings dynamic and encouraging, motivating us to action our allotted tasks. I see the CDAT as leading by example, which embraces the basic tenet of community development, as I understand it.

Bill Robertson, Surry Hills CDAT Chair

Online parenting help

The New South Wales Government launched a parenting web site as part of an effort to further support and assist parents and carers. The site was developed by the Department of Community Services' NSW Parenting Centre in partnership with the Office of Children and Young People and Families First. It follows an independent evaluation of the Department of Community Services' NSW Parenting Campaign which revealed that many parents, particularly young parents, turn first to the Internet for information. See www.parenting.nsw.gov.au

Exchange Magazine

Exchange is the quarterly magazine of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People. The Commission works to make New South Wales a better place for all children and young people.

Contact the Commission for Children and Young People Ph: (02) 9286 7276, e-mail: kids@kids.nsw.gov.au Exchange can be sent as an e-mail edition. To subscribe, please visit www.kids.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/eaddress.cgi and follow the prompts.

Drug Action Week 2003

Drug Action Week 2003 will be held from **23-28 June 2003**.

Drug Action Week promotes achievements and highlights the work being done in the Alcohol and other Drugs field. Events held in 2002 ranged from film festivals to public forums. Events can be as grand and large scale as the National Launch or as small as a BBQ in the park for families and the community.

You can get involved in Drug Action Week by holding your own event or by getting involved in other events planned for your area. Contact your Project Manager for further information or check out www.adca.org.au for updates about Drug Action Week 2003.



Who can I contact for more information?

If you would like more information about any of these Government responses to community drug issues, contact the central office staff, Project Manager in your region (see below) or visit the website www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/drugs_action

Project Managers can provide additional resources that explain the Strategies and the work of the Community Drug Action Teams in more detail.

Central Office

General Inquiries – Assistant Project Officer, Community Drug Strategies
Ph: (02) 9228 3731 Fax: (02) 9228 5517

Project Director, Community Drug Strategies
Yvonne Korn
Ph: (02) 9228 5172 Fax: (02) 9228 5517
E-mail: korny@premiers.nsw.gov.au

Project Manager (Statewide Issues)
Liz Junck
Ph: (02) 9228 3583 Fax: (02) 9228 5517
E-mail: junckl@premiers.nsw.gov.au

Regional Offices

Project Manager, Coastal Sydney
Wendy Williamson
Premier's Department – Coastal Sydney office
Ph: (02) 9228 3730 Fax: (02) 9228 3907
E-mail: wendy.williamson@premiers.nsw.gov.au

Project Manager, South Western Sydney
Robert Bosi
Premier's Department – Bankstown office
Ph: (02) 9793 1577 Fax: (02) 9793 1865
E-mail: robert.bosi@premiers.nsw.gov.au

Project Manager, Western Sydney
Robert Bosi
Premier's Department – Parramatta office
Ph: (02) 9633 3233 Fax: (02) 9633 1121
E-mail: robert.bosi@premiers.nsw.gov.au

Project Manager, Central Coast/Hunter
Anjali Boronowskis
Premier's Department – Gosford office
Ph: (02) 4337 2300 Fax: (02) 4324 2698 and
Premier's Department – Newcastle office
Ph: (02) 4927 8799 Fax: (02) 4927 8798
E-mail: anjali@premiers.nsw.gov.au

Project Manager, Illawarra/South East
Lisa Simone
Premier's Department – Wollongong office
Ph: (02) 4224 9903 Fax: (02) 4224 9901
E-mail: lisa.simone@premiers.nsw.gov.au

Project Manager, North Coast
Jenny Grant
Premier's Department – Coffs Harbour office
Ph: (02) 6648 7230 Fax: (02) 6648 7211
E-mail: jenny.grant@premiers.nsw.gov.au

Project Manager, New England/North West NSW
Andrew Parker
Premier's Department – Armidale office
Ph: (02) 6771 4827 Fax: (02) 6771 3658
E-mail: aparker@bluepin.net.au

Project Manager, Riverina/Murray
Karen MacLean
Premier's Department – Albury office
Tel: (02) 6023 8146 Fax: (02) 6023 8166
E-mail: karen.maclean@dragnet.com.au

Project Manager, Western NSW
Annie Fraser
Premier's Department – Dubbo office
Ph: (02) 6881 6377 Fax: (02) 6884 7405
E-mail: afraser@hwy.com.au

Please put me on the mailing list – return slip

Name: _____
 Organisation: _____
 Address: _____
 _____ Postcode: _____
 Telephone: _____ Fax: _____
 E-mail: _____

Send to: Assistant Project Officer, Community Drug Strategies, Premier's Department Level 32, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000 Fax: (02) 9228 5517