

Drug Action



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NSW COMMUNITY DRUG STRATEGIES NEWSLETTER

Talking drugs, taking action – DRUG ACTION WEEK

Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs) across NSW took part in the first national *Drug Action Week* (June 25 – 29 2001).

Drug Action Week aims to raise awareness of drug issues and find better ways to take action on drug problems. CDATs organised free events, such as movie screenings and public forums – read on for some examples.

For a complete overview of locally based activities during *Drug Action Week* visit the Drugs and Community Action website at www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/drugs_action. The section includes stories and pictures from CDATs.

Drug Action Week was coordinated nationally by the Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA).

Examples of community drug action during *Drug Action Week*

In **Sydney** Special Minister of State, John Della Bosca hosted a screening of the critically acclaimed movie *Traffic*, at Hoyts George Street cinemas. Among those attending were many of the community representatives who attended the 1999 NSW Drug Summit. CDATs in **Wollongong, Forster, Cessnock** and **Maitland** also hosted special free screenings of *Traffic* in partnership with local cinemas, using the film to promote awareness and discussion.

Get High on Life – a Drug Awareness and Information Expo was held in Kibble Park on the Central Coast to raise community awareness of drug-related issues. This event was organised by the **Central Coast Aboriginal CDAT** with support from other Central Coast CDATs and local agencies. Erina High School students were actively involved in organising the Expo and established a website to help promote *Drug Action Week*.



Students Brendan Waite and Alicia Charley with educator Ross Clark at *Get High on Life* – Central Coast community drug expo. Picture courtesy of the Central Coast Express.

Youth bands and the Djuingang Aboriginal dancers entertained the 500 plus crowd. Information stalls were run by health, welfare and community agencies, with staff on hand to answer questions. Speakers included local iron man Daniel Shade, Northern Eagles star, Nick Kosef and athlete, Margaret Beardsley. A community dot painting was organised by the Aboriginal Unit of Hunter TAFE, to encourage community participation in promoting the message 'Koori culture can help everyone break down the barriers to a drug-free culture and life-style'.

A drug awareness night and hypothetical was organised by the **Killarney Vale/Bateau Bay/Tumbi Umbi CDAT**. The question was 'In the year 2011 an 11 year old overdoses in our community. In the year 2001, what can we as a community do to prevent this occurrence?' The hypothetical explored a range of issues relating to licit and illicit drug use in the community.

Canterbury CDAT members including police, community groups, health and DOCS held information stalls at Riverwood, Ashfield and Campsie. CDAT members handed out printed information and discussed issues relating to drugs, treatment and the law.

Corowa CDAT joined forces with Corowa Safety Committee and organised a drug and alcohol-free music event, enjoyed by more than 200 young people. The night provided a perfect opportunity for the team to talk to young people about drug and alcohol issues, and literature on these issues was distributed. Many young people on the night expressed a lack of knowledge of where they could get help and support for drug and alcohol problems. The CDAT will focus on this issue in the near future.

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drug
action week

Editorial

Congratulations to Joynt Youth Action. They received a *National Drug Prevention Award* at the third annual Ted Noffs Awards in Sydney on 30 June 2001 in recognition of their valuable education and prevention work with young people in the Southern Highlands.

The awards were just one of the activities held during *Drug Action Week*. It was an exciting week with many CDATs putting on special events and activities.

Welcome to Jeremy Bacich, the new Drugs and Community Action Strategy Project Manager for the North Coast, who will be based at Coffs Harbour. Jeremy has extensive experience, coming to the position from the Western Australia Drug Abuse Strategy Office, where he was responsible for the establishment of Local Drug Action Groups across that state.

Yvonne Koon

Community Drug Strategies

Drug Action Editorial Committee

Anjali Boronowskis, *Drugs and Community Action Strategy Project Manager, Central Coast/Hunter*

Jenny Gilbert, *Airds/Bradbury Community Drug Action Team*

Liz Junck, *Drugs and Community Action Strategy Project Manager, Statewide Issues*

Jan Heslep, *Drugs and Community Action Strategy Project Manager, South West Sydney*

Kate Toohey, *Blue Mountains Community Drug Action Team*

Amanda Pullinger, *Community Drug Information Strategy Project Manager*

Regional Profiles

In this edition of *Drug Action* we profile two more Drugs and Community Action Strategy regions – New England/North West and Western Sydney.

For more information about CDATs in your area visit www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/drugs_action or contact the Project Manager in your region (contact details on page 6).

WESTERN SYDNEY



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The Western Sydney population is younger and more likely to be from a non-English speaking background than other regions in NSW. 15.6 per cent of the NSW population resides in Western Sydney. Using local government boundaries as a guide, CDATs are established in seven centres. Many have projects focusing on young people.

CDATs already established in the region

Auburn	Contact: Moira Magrath	Tel: 9685 2666
Blacktown	Contact: Rhonda Sadler	Tel: 9881 8729
Blue Mountains	Contact: David Maddocks	Tel: 4751 3556
Hawkesbury	Contact: Teresa Luland	Tel: 4560 5731
Lithgow	Contact: Mahima Price	Tel: 6350 2757

Parramatta

Please contact Peter Connie for more details.

Penrith

Contact: Kevin Hedge Tel: 4734 3167

Examples of CDAT activities in Western Sydney

The **Lithgow CDAT** and Lithgow Youth Housing Program (LYHP) are running a peer education project involving 30 young people aged 12-18 years. The project will train a group of young people in leadership, knowledge of drug issues and skills so that they can educate other young people about drugs and their effects. Young people from high schools, youth services and youth accommodation services will be involved as peer educators.

The **Auburn CDAT** identified a lack of information about drug use patterns in the local area as an issue for the CDAT. In order to develop an accurate picture of drug use in Auburn the CDAT has negotiated a partnership with the Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC) to conduct a research project to identify drug use patterns in the local government area.

NEW ENGLAND/NORTH WEST REGION

Project Manager – Lizzie Mulder
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Lizzie is located at:
Suite 5, 175 Rusden Street
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

The Regional Project Manager commenced in November 2000. Communities in the region are enthusiastic and are supportive of the Strategy. Most CDATs are focussing on issues affecting young people. A Regional Consultative Group is assisting the development of a regional plan and supporting CDATs.

CDATs already established in the region:

Glen Innes

Contact: Lisa Breakwell Tel: 02 6730 2166

Inverell

Contact: Terry Nesbitt Tel: 02 6722 4038

Gunnedah

Contact: Lucy Burden Tel: 02 6740 2250

CDATs are being established in Armidale, Tamworth and Narrabri. If you are interested in joining the planning groups in these towns please contact Lizzie Mulder for more details.

Examples of CDAT activities in New England and the North West

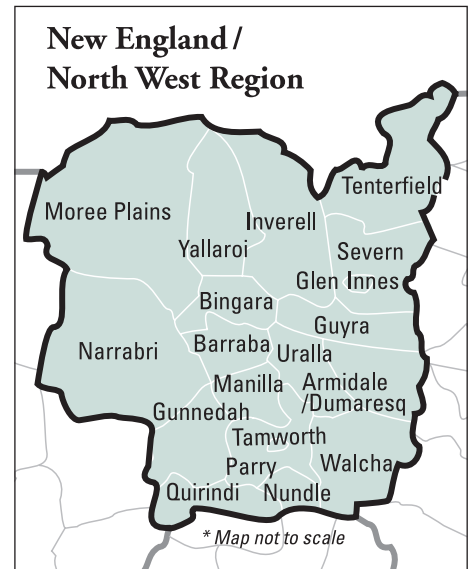
The **Inverell CDAT** is planning an education and awareness program for young people and parents and is undertaking a feasibility study in relation to the establishment of a youth centre in Inverell. The team is also working with the *Inverell Times*

and police to produce cards with information about drug and alcohol services.

Glen Innes Drug Awareness Committee

has been active for a number of years and operates a resource centre and a telephone line on drugs and alcohol for the Glen Innes district. The group works closely with the Glen Innes Community Safety Committee and as such has an advisory role for the local council.

The **Gunnedah Youth Action Team** was formed as an outcome of the Gunnedah Youth Week Forum in April 2001. Prevention is the main focus of the team and they aim to organise regular drug and alcohol-free events for young people in and around Gunnedah. The team works closely with the Crime Prevention and Community Services Committees of their local council. On 7 July the Team held an official launch at the opening of the new skate park shelter. Despite the rain and freezing cold



about 40 people braved the weather and attended the launch officiated by Councillor Gae Swain, the Mayor of Gunnedah.



Members of the Youth Action Team with Lucy Burden, Youth Services Coordinator at Gunnedah Shire Council at the launch of the Gunnedah Youth Action Team. Photo courtesy of the Namoi Valley Independent.



Get High on Life – community dot painting at the Drug Awareness and Information Expo on the Central Coast.

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The **Kings Cross CDAT** hosted a tour of drug and alcohol health and support services in the Kings Cross area. These included (in order of visit) Kings Cross Police Station, K2 (needle exchange, information, advice and counselling), the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, the Wayside Chapel, Gorman House Detoxification Service and the Kirketon Road Centre. Each agency made a brief presentation, providing an overview of their work.

Cummeragunja, a small Aboriginal community near Moama on the Victorian border, organised

a poster competition for local young people. Community members were invited to a family barbecue where they could judge the winners. The winners were Kian Wise (aged 1 year), Kiara Cooper (aged 5 years), Kevin Golden (aged 9 years) and Ramptha Edwards (aged 13 years).

As part of their *Drug Action Week* activities, the **Lismore CDAT** gained the co-operation of their local newspaper, *The Northern Star* to feature advertisements adapted from the *WA Drug Aware* campaign. The advertisements were printed for free. The partnership has continued beyond *Drug Action Week*.

Youth Drug Forum – Young people making a difference

The recent Joynt Youth Action Youth Drug Forum provided an exciting opportunity for 60 young people of the Southern Highlands to address youth drug use and related problems.

Using a peer led model developed by the Macarthur Drug and Alcohol Youth Project, the three-day Drug Forum helped young people to identify drug concerns and to work out ways to deal with these in their local school community.

Students from Chevalier, Bowral and Moss Vale High Schools and Oxley College and Frensham took part in the forum.

11 young people from the participating schools attended Group Leadership Training prior to the Forum. Group leaders then played a major role at the forum, facilitating the majority of the sessions for their student peers.

During the forum each school group identified drug-related issues and suggested strategies to address them. Issues included:

- tobacco and cannabis use and the concern that smoking is perceived to provide a desirable image for young people. The effects of passive smoking were also a concern
- ecstasy and the general lack of understanding about the harms associated with its use
- alcohol and the harm caused at social events, as well as its effect on relationships.

The final day of the forum saw each school group present their drug-related issue and

planned strategy to an audience in excess of 50 people – including WIN TV and the Southern Highland News.

“The final presentations were a true reflection of the passion and ability of all the young people at the forum”, said Michele Scamps, President Joynt Youth Action.

Following the Forum

- schools will be encouraged to support their students in implementing the action plan they have developed. Joynt Youth Action has received funds from the Premier’s Department to assist schools in the implementation of their action ideas.
- a youth drug advisory group will be established to provide youth participation and input to Joynt Youth Action.

This is an edited version of an article written by Linda Goldspink Lord, Macarthur Drug and Alcohol Youth Project. You can download the full version from the Drugs and Community Action website at www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/drugs_action

Joynt Youth Action is located in the Southern Highlands of NSW. Their aim is to create better opportunities for young people. In particular, the association focuses on youth drug and alcohol use and abuse in the context of broader youth issues. The Youth Drug forum was a major project for the CDAT taking 12 months to plan.



Young people making a difference – participants at the Joynt Youth Action Youth Drug Forum.

TAKING PARTicipation seriously



Participation is an important way of helping to build a sense of connection between people and the communities in which we live.

Participation is more than just giving members of our community a say – it’s about listening to their views, taking them seriously and wherever possible putting their thoughts and ideas into action.

The Commission for Children and Young People has produced a toolkit for organisations who want practical advice about how to involve children and young people in decision-making.

TAKING PARTicipation seriously is made up of separate booklets, *Sharing the Stage* and *Conferences and Events* to give you good ideas that are practical and fun.

Sharing the Stage highlights the key elements that are needed to make participation of children and young people more effective. *Conferences and Events* is a 'how to' booklet written for adults and young people who want to plan, organise and run meetings, conferences and major events so that children and young people can participate fully in them.

Both booklets provide tips and ideas for organisations and good examples of effective participation from organisations across NSW.

CDATs are just some of the groups that will find this kit useful.

The tool kit costs \$39 and is available from the Commission on 02 9286 7276 or visit their website at www.kids.nsw.gov.au

Community rallies – Drug Action Week in Mudgee

Drug Action Week served as the launch pad for the work of the newly formed Mudgee Drug Action Team (MDAT) and saw the Mudgee and Gulgong communities taking a strong stand in support of CDAT initiatives.

The Mudgee team aimed to raise awareness of drug issues through a variety of strategies, which were all well supported and promoted within the community. Activities included a visit to local schools from young people involved in the Teen Challenge drug rehabilitation program, a film and supper night for local youth and the launch of a competition encouraging young people to give their views on drug issues.

As team leader, I was delighted by the response to all these activities. This has been a real community effort, firstly by our team which has representation from all the main interest groups and, even more importantly, from the general community.

We had five young men from Teen Challenge speaking to 200 high school students in Mudgee and Gulgong as well as to community members at a function at our local Youth Cafe. These young men told of their own battles with drugs, why they became involved, the consequences and the risks and the level of communication with our own young people was phenomenal.

Our film screening of the movie 'Loser' attracted a further 200 young people and their parents and was a wonderful, informal way to introduce our team and to launch our writing and free expression competition which challenges young people to think through drug issues and present them in any format.



Young people at the Mudgee CDAT film night.



Annie Fraser, Premier's Department, Sue Harding, Team Leader of Mudgee CDAT, Sr Constable Wayne Taylor of Mudgee Police speaking with young people at the film night.

The Mudgee community has thrown its weight behind the competition with over \$2000 worth of prizes donated from local businesses to encourage young people to become involved. The competition has also been supported through local primary and high schools.

Much of the early success of MDAT activities can be attributed to the proactive stance taken by local media. The *Mudgee Guardian* newspaper has given us prominent coverage including a full front page introducing MDAT. Radio 2 MG has run an extensive interview about the team and WIN television screened two news stories leading up to *Drug Action Week*. Both the print and radio media have provided subsidised advertising for the team events.

The *Mudgee Guardian* also printed a revealing interview with a former drug addict, Barry who agreed to tell his story to help raise awareness during *Drug Action Week*.

The end result has been to get the local community talking and thinking about drug issues.

I have people coming up to me in the street to ask about MDAT, parents

thanking us for the message we have given their children and individuals and community organisations volunteering help or offering ideas. It has been a great response so far.

Time will tell how our competition evolves but with the closing date in two weeks we are already getting a steady flow of entries which is encouraging. If there are sufficient entries the team plans to mount an exhibition of the works, host a presentation dinner which will bring the sponsors and young people together and hopefully print a book of Mudgee district youth views on drugs.

Other projects flagged for the future include the establishment of a court diversion program for young offenders who are arrested by police on drug-related charges, an information dissemination project in which brochures outlining where people can seek help for drugs issues will be available in local businesses, and the establishment of a support group for drug users who are trying to quit.

*Sue Harding
Team Leader, Mudgee Drug Action Team*

Local Libraries Supporting Community Drug Action

As part of *Drug Action Week*, Special Minister of State John Della Bosca announced a new initiative that will make up-to-date information about drug-related issues available at all local libraries across New South Wales.

Libraries are a great source of information and often a central meeting place for communities. There are over 370 public libraries across NSW – more than 230 of these are in regional areas.

Resources available will include referral information, books, pamphlets and on-line information through computer terminals.

Librarians will be trained to help community members find the information they need and educated about the complexities of the drug issue.

The project is jointly sponsored by the State Library of NSW and the Premier's Department.

For more information about this project contact Peita Shirvington, Project Manager, Community Drug Information Strategy, Premier's Department on 9228 5157.

Strengthening Rural Communities Resource Kit

The *Strengthening Rural Communities Resource Kit* is a new handbook and set of tools for people working in rural communities.

It was produced by the Strengthening Communities Unit of the Premier's Department following 12 months of research and consultations in several small rural communities across NSW.

The Kit provides a framework for those working on key social, economic or environmental issues which face local communities. Included in the Kit are tools for conducting a community profile, auditing the assets of a community and developing a community-owned plan.

The Kit is available in hard copy and on CD. Contact Sue Belcher, Office of Regional Communities, Orange on 6393 0000 (for non-Sydney inquirers), or in Sydney, please contact Debbie Collins on (02) 9228 4735.

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.

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