

WHO Safe Community News - March 2001

From down under – Australian Safe Communities

Australia has a total of eleven communities accredited and committed to promoting the Safe Community model - they range in size from 4,500 to 250,000 people. They are in Sydney and in the far west and there are many in the south of our big, dry land. There are many more working towards a safer community – soon we hope to have some in the tropical region of Queensland as well as the rural areas of both Victoria and New South Wales....

In addition to these communities there are two affiliate support centres – both of whom are located in Melbourne, Victoria. One at Monash University Accident Research Centre whilst the other is located at the Safety Centre of the Royal Children's Hospital in Parkville, Melbourne. The 11 accredited communities and support centres have all come about since 1994 - but the effort to extend safety has gone for much longer.

Two major concentrations of development in community safety promotion are in the states of NSW and Victoria.

The **NSW SafeComm** (*contact Jennie Pry at NSW Health <Jpry@doh.health.nsw.gov.au>*) is a jointly funded community safety initiative between State Government Departments, NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) and NSW Health. The three year pilot program is the first phase of a broader 'whole of government' initiative in which NSW Health will attempt to form partnerships with other major government sectors to promote the development of local infrastructure to sustain injury prevention initiatives in NSW.

The initial phase has focussed on the development of a business partnership with the RTA to jointly fund 3 pilot Safe Communities projects. Area Health Services (AHS) within NSW competed for funds under this program and were short-listed against their capacity to work towards the W.H.O Safe Community criteria. The Illawarra AHS, Mid North Coast AHS and the Greater Murray AHS were the successful applicants and commenced their pilot projects in November of 1999. Accreditation as a WHO Safe Community is encouraged as a goal to work towards, but not an essential requirement of project funding. A small separate pool of funds is also available on an annual competitive basis for use by the four accredited Safe Communities in NSW.

A State Management Committee (SMC) was formed in (June 1999) to formalise the partnership between NSW Health and the RTA and determine the parameters of the program. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two agencies was agreed and signed off by their respective Chief Officers.

The three pilot NSW SafeComm are at:

1. Gundagai – in south west of the State, it has an initial focus on:

Road Safety, including fatigue, speed, school zones and driver awareness. **Work Safety**, including industrial settings, farmers and itinerant workers. **Falls Prevention** including access, physical activity, safe homes and referral. **Sports Safety** including 'Smart Play', coaches, equipment and swim safe.

2. Macleay Hastings Safe Communities is located on the North coast of NSW

Key Objectives

- Pedestrian Environment
- Fleet Safety
- Home Safety – Child Injury
- Injury Data
- Alcohol and Injury

During the first year of the project, the coordinator has worked closely with the Project Advisory Committee to demonstrate the value of making injury and safety promotion part of their core businesses. This 'capacity building' approach is focused on the development of sustainable safety partnerships and the establishment of a local infrastructure to promote safety.

1. Kiama Safe Communities is located just south of Iillawarra Safe Communities

One of the great strengths of Kiama Safe Communities is the support and potential leadership role demonstrated by the Mayor and the Manager of Environmental services. Kiama Safe Communities has the advantage of drawing from an established Municipal Health Plan that identifies community safety as part of Council's core business. The Safe Communities grant has provided Council with the opportunity to create a local infrastructure for sustainable safety promotion in Kiama. Both project coordinator's have invested time in demonstrating possibilities and winning 'runs on the board' to gain credibility with the community and secure their support. Accreditation with WHO Safe Communities remains of great interest to the management committee and will be discussed further as the project progresses.

Plans for NSW SafeComm

NSW SafeComm has held a number of NSW Safe Communities network meetings and symposia in an effort to build and develop the growing network of 'Safe Communities' in NSW and to raise the profile of this model to potential partners. Presently, NSW Health has started discussions with State government departments such as NSW Fire Brigades, Motor Accidents Authority, Attorney General's and Department of Planning & Urban Affairs about the potential for a formal Safe Communities partnership arrangement at the State level. If NSW SafeComm does expand in this way, then more funding will be made available to seed the development of new Safe Communities in NSW.

**While in Victoria: contact Carmen Lee at Monash University Accident Research Centre
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The Victorian Safe Communities Network (VSCN) enjoyed a successful and busy year in 2000. Highlights included:

- the accreditation of the City of Melbourne as a WHO Safe Community in April. Melbourne is the first capital city in the Southern Hemisphere to join the WHO Network of Safe Communities, and joins two other Victorian municipalities in the Network: the City of Hume (formerly accredited as the Shire of Bulla in 1994 and accredited as the City of Hume in 1996 following council amalgamations) and the City of Latrobe (1996).
- involvement in the international symposium "Community Safety in Major Urban Environments, 3 - 7 April, hosted by the City of Melbourne as part of its accreditation. The VSCN assisted with the organisation of the symposium and conducted a 2 day travelling seminar to visit accredited and aspiring Safe Communities and discuss their programs. Monash University Accident Research Centre, an Affiliate Support Centre, hosted the WHO Safe Communities Affiliate Support Centres meeting: "Towards a Safe Communities Research Agenda" during the symposium.
- the emergence of up to eight potential aspirants to WHO Safe Communities accreditation throughout Victoria. The Cities of Wangaratta, Moreland and Port Phillip met with Prof. Leif Svanstrom during the Melbourne symposium to discuss the accreditation process. Another 5 communities plan to seek accreditation in future.
- a very successful Community Safety Week, September 3-9. Coordinated by the Department of Justice, Community Safety Week 2000 saw approximately 520 activities organised by over 300

organisations registered in a program of events. With the theme “Live, Work, Play, Safe”, communities participated in a range of activities relating to injury prevention, crime and violence prevention.

- increased growth of membership of the VSCN, from 37 members representing 30 organisations in January 2000 to 60 members representing 52 organisations by October. The VSCN contact database also continues to grow, comprising over 300 member and non member contacts from a diverse range of safety related occupations.
- a visit by a delegation from South Korea in November. Researchers from the Ajou University, Suwon and an official from the Suwon municipality visited to learn about the Victorian Injury Surveillance and Applied Research System (VISS) and discuss the design, implementation and evaluation of various injury prevention programs.

We look forward to another exciting year in 2001; an upcoming highlight is a visit to Victoria in March by Paul Kells, founder of the Safe Communities Foundation in Canada. We continue to support new and existing programs, looking forward to successfully applying for further funding partnerships to extend the VSCN Support Project, and to another – bigger and better – Community Safety Week.

Safe Communities also are accredited in South Australia, Western Australia while Queensland and Tasmania have activity happeningafter that.... the Northern Territory and maybe Lord Howe and the Cocos Island... who knows!

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Latrobe City, Victoria, Australia

