

Mackay/Whitsunday Safe Communities Project

12 monthly report

February 2001 to February 2002



SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

INTRODUCTION

As a response to above average injury rates identified in the Mackay/Whitsunday region, the Mackay/Whitsunday Safe Communities Project (MWSCP) was established to address this issue and help the region become Queensland's first internationally recognised safe community. In February 2000, the MWSCP was officially launched in both Mackay and Whitsunday.

This project is a World Health Organisation (WHO) supported approach to community injury control that aims to reduce injury in the Mackay/Whitsunday region by 30 per cent over a five year period. It will be guided by the criteria and processes of the WHO's safe communities framework which has been proven to be an effective means of reducing injury throughout the world, including Australia.

While a number of single issue safety promotion projects have been conducted over recent years, this project aims to coordinate a systematic sustained response to injury in the region that is multi-sectorial in scope, collaborative in strategies and ecological in perspective.

This is the second annual report for the MWSCP and will focus on the achievements over the last year from February 2001 to February 2002.

OPERATING STRUCTURE

The Operating Structure of the MWSCP consists of a part-time Project Facilitator, Project Management Team and a number of Project Working Groups.

Part-time Project Facilitator

Tropical Public Health Unit Network, Queensland Health is providing funding for a part-time project officer to facilitate/coordinate the project. Kathryn McFarlane started in this position January 2002. Paul Vardon was previously in this position. Limited funding to support injury prevention interventions/strategies has also been made available by Queensland Health. This financial commitment by Queensland Health will be available for the next 2-4 years but in a reducing capacity.

Project Management Team

Jan Kilbourne: Manager Community Development, Mackay City Council

Peter Day: Manager of Environmental Health, Whitsunday Shire Council

Peter Driemel: Environmental Health Officer, Whitsunday Shire Council

Bruce Green: Youth Development Officer, Whitsunday Shire Council

Kevin Harrigen: Officer in Charge, Proserpine Police

Dr Dale Hanson: Emergency Physician, Mackay Base Hospital - Queensland Health

Nicole Madam: Road Safety Consultant, Queensland Department of Transport

Bruce Smith: Area Director, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

Jamie Cunington: Queensland Ambulance Service

Kathryn McFarlane: Senior Health Promotion Officer, Tropical Public Health Unit Network - Queensland Health

The project management team (PMT) consists of representatives from Mackay City Council, Whitsunday Shire Council, Queensland Transport, Queensland Police Service, James Cook University, Queensland Health and more recently the Department of Emergency Services. Representatives of DES have been actively involved on the Project Management Team from January 2002.

Over the last 12 month period, the PMT have met regularly at 4-6 weekly intervals.

Project Working Groups

There are several project working groups currently involved in the MWSCP including a Senior Safety Working Group in Mackay; a Child Safety Working Group in Whitsunday; a Collaborative Injury Research Working Group; a Road Safety Working Group; and an Alcohol and Injury Working Group. Given that this a long-term initiative, further project working groups are planned to target other areas of significant injury.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Senior Safety Working Group

An inter-sectoral group made up of representatives from the Mackay City Council, Mackay Community Health Services, Tropical Public Health Unit, Mackay Division of General Practice and local community members aged 60 years and above. This working group has utilised a multi-strategic approach to address the issue of falls prevention, as well as address perceptions of safety for older persons. This working group is currently based in Mackay. Achievements include – ongoing Healthy Homes Party Program; promotion of physical activity through integration of Just Walk It and Sitting Dance Programs; Safe Shop initiative; and GP Falls Prevention Resource.

Healthy Homes Plan

Volunteer based peer education falls prevention program supported by the Aged Care and Disability Unit of Mackay Community Health Centre. Three volunteer trained facilitators have conducted 8 parties. Parties were initially aimed at small peer groups but feedback revealed that using existing settings such as University for the Third Age (U3A) groups were less intrusive. With this setting change the group renamed the project from 'Healthy Homes Party' to 'Healthy Homes Plan'. An estimated 200 seniors have attended an information session.

Feedback from volunteer facilitators identified that they were able to use the knowledge gained from participation in the Healthy Homes Plan Program in their work areas (including: community options, home care and blue care respite). While feedback from those who attended stated that their knowledge of falls prevention had increased markedly following the program and some had actively taken suggested steps to prevent falls. In February 2002 the volunteers requested some revision of training in relation to new products available and also to coincide with the orientation of one new volunteer facilitator. The focus of the group over the next 12 months will be at targeting older persons who do not attend organised groups.

Just Walk It

The four community based walking groups established in 2000 continued during 2001, one in Slade Point (with approximately 10 walkers), two in Andergrove (with approximately 10 walkers each) and one workplace group (with approximately 6 walkers). Near the end of 2001 attendance dropped in all locations. Verbal feedback suggests this was due to other end of year commitments by the walk organisers and the heat of summer. No walks have resumed in 2002. However, Mackay Community Health is committed to starting walks up again in 2002.

Safe Shop Program

In December 2000, a pilot safe shop program (based on a concept developed and utilised effectively by a local Government authority in Victoria) was implemented in the Mackay Central Business District/City Heart to enhance perceptions of safety particularly for older persons. More than 60 local businesses are participating in this program. Participating retailers provide information services to shoppers, as well as offering to call emergency services if a customer is concerned about their personal safety.

Shops are identified by a bright orange 'Safe Shop' sticker. Evaluation in July 2001, revealed that the majority of businesses involved had a good understanding of the kit and thought it was a good strategy particularly in promoting customer relations. 30 percent of businesses had been utilised by customers as a 'Safe Shop'. It is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign as persons using the Central Business District may feel safer knowing that 'Safe Shops' exist but never use the service. However, older people particularly have commented that they feel more safe and comfortable knowing that 'Safe Shops' are willing to give them assistance when required.

Medication Disposal

Given that medications can be a risk factor for falls, in July 2001, the Senior Safety Working Group surveyed local pharmacies regarding availability and use of the national safe medication disposal strategy OPAL/RUM. This survey revealed that all pharmacies in the area were interested in participating in an awareness raising campaign to remind community members of the medication disposal services available at pharmacies. OPAL/RUM posters and pamphlets were distributed to all pharmacies and the OPAL/RUM program was promoted during Community Safety Week 2001.

Sitting Dance

The Sitting Dance project aims at increasing physical activity in older people. The program focuses on gentle exercises and participants remain seated in chairs. The popularity of this group has increased during 2001 with approximately 60 people attending each session. An alternative venue to the Mackay Community Health Centre is currently being sort. As not all venues have appropriate seats, the Mackay City Council has offered to purchase suitable chairs to promote the use of their new Andergrove Community Hall.

GP Fall Prevention Resources

The Mackay Division of General Practice recently launched a Falls Desktop Guide for General Practitioners together with a Falls poster and patient information kit. These were developed in collaboration with other Divisions in response to the Enhanced Primary Care Falls initiative. The main focus of the information contained in the guide relates to identifying the major risk factors for falls and disseminating relevant information to patients in an effort to provide intervention, management and support. Evaluation of this resource is planned.

Collaborative Injury Research Working Group

Membership includes representatives from Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit (QISU), Queensland Health and James Cook University (JCU). Surveillance data is collected at all public hospitals in the region (Clermont, Dysart, Mackay, Moranbah, Proserpine and Sarina) and the Private Medical Service at the Mackay Mater (from September 2000). The surveillance data is analysed at a state level by QISU and at a regional level by the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, JCU, in collaboration with Queensland Health and QISU. This provides a powerful epidemiological tool to study the causation and impact of injury and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, while also providing an ongoing injury profile for the MWSCP.

The working group identifies potential focus areas for the MWSCP. Over the past 12 months, the data has been analysed to reveal that Mackay/Whitsunday has significant injury presentations in relation to: sports injuries; young males involved in motor vehicle accidents; bicycle injuries in children; and household injuries.

The group has been able to assist the other working groups with specific data requests, for example, the Alcohol and Injury Working Group requested data on the injury statistics that occurred at licensed premises in Mackay.

Over the last twelve months the working group has been preparing articles for an injury monograph for the Mackay/Whitsunday area planned for publishing in June 2002. The six papers currently in draft form are:

- 'Safe Communities: An ecological approach to safety promotion';
- 'Becoming Queensland's First Safe Community: Considering sustainability from the outset';
- 'Collection of NDS-IS level 2 Injury Surveillance Data in Regional Queensland';
- 'Practices, Knowledge and Perceptions Towards Accident and Injury in the Mackay/Whitsunday community';
- 'Patterns and Causes of Injuries During Organised Sporting Activities in the Mackay/Whitsunday Region 1998/99';
- 'Non-Fatal Injury Presentations to the Mackay Base Hospital Emergency Department 1998/99'

Since 2001 the Tom and Dorothy Cook Grant, JCU, specifically supporting research in the Mackay area has been promoted by highlighting the injury database available for research in partnership with the MWSCP. The grant is available at the time of this report.

'Health Indicators for Queensland: Northern Zone 2001' Queensland Health, report has been released. The data compiled will be used by the Collaborative Research Working Group and details the health differences between the Mackay area in comparison to the Northern Health Zone and to Queensland.

Child Safety Working Group

An inter-sectoral group made up of representatives from Whitsunday Community Health Centre, Education Queensland, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Transport, Whitsunday Neighbourhood Centre (Department of Family, Youth and Community Care), Tropical Public Health Unit and the Whitsunday Shire Council. This working group is currently based in Whitsunday and is addressing bicycling injuries. Initiatives include – integration of Queensland Transport's Bike Ed Program into local schools; share the road campaign; development, implementation and evaluation of Operation BikeSafe; liaison with local Government to discuss supportive infrastructure/environments for safe bike riding and provision of seeding funding for local schools to implement KidPower.

Queensland Transport Bike Ed Program

The Queensland Transport Bike Ed Program is a comprehensive practical bicycle education program designed to give children aged 8 to 13 years (grades 4-5) the skills, practice and knowledge they need to survive on the roads. In this twelve month period, the Proserpine and Cannonvale State Primary Schools have both comprehensively implemented Bike Education to Grade Four students. This is expected to be an ongoing activity in the Grade Four curriculum in both schools.

Operation BikeSafe

Operation BikeSafe is a proactive program to promote safe bike riding behaviour to 9-13 year olds on the roads of the Whitsunday region. This project uses positive reinforcement rather than reactive enforcement as its strategy, utilising police, schools and the media. 2001 was the second time operation BikeSafe had occurred in the Whitsunday region. Police nominated children demonstrating safe bike riding. All students nominated were placed in a draw to win bicycles donated by two service clubs in the region, and these prizes were drawn prior to Christmas.

Share the Road

Locally produced Share the Road Resources were distributed to Driving Schools in the Whitsunday Region for dissemination to Learner Drivers. The resource outlines strategies for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians in safe use of the road.

KidPower

In 2001 the KidPower resource was implemented in 4 of the 6 local Whitsunday primary schools - Cannonvale, Hamilton Island, Proserpine and Whitsunday Christian Community Schools. KidPower is an innovative injury prevention resource aimed at significantly reducing the number of school based injuries in young people aged 10-14 years. KidPower uses a holistic approach based on the health promoting schools process.

An injury committee is established that includes students and other members of the school community as a means of identifying potentially dangerous areas and behaviours within the school, and developing strategies to prevent injuries occurring. Schools involved reported that Kidpower had provided practical guidance for establishing sustainable action to address injury.

Alcohol and Injury Working Group

An inter-sectoral group made up of representatives from Mackay Health Service District, Liquor Licensing Division, Queensland Transport, Queensland Police Service, Whitsunday Shire Council and Tropical Public Health Unit. This working group is based in Mackay and is addressing injuries involving Mackay and the Whitsundays.

Safe Party Kit

The safe party kit (based on a concept developed and utilised effectively by a local Government authority in Victoria) was promoted for the second year leading up to the festive season (November to January). The safe party kit, 'Steps to a Smarter Party', provides tips for holding successful, enjoyable and safe parties specifically addressing antisocial behaviour, road safety and alcohol consumption issues. Party convenors were given the opportunity to register their party with the Police Service.

This was the second year the safe party kit had been promoted and was hugely successful. 44 parties were registered with the Police Service between the period of November 2001 to February 2002. The reasons for success is seen to be due to an incident widely publicised in the local media of an unsafe party in November 2001, from which there was much community concern and an effective response from the Police Service in promoting this resource. Parties are continuing in smaller numbers to be registered with the Police post the festive season. The Police are continuing with promoting the project throughout the year rather than just the festive season.

Drink Rites

3 Drink rites were conducted in licensed premises of the Mackay/Whitsunday region by Queensland Police Service, Queensland Transport and Queensland Health staff to promote the responsible drinking of alcohol. One of the Drink Rites was a "special" Community Safety Week event involving 3 Mackay City Councillors and 3 executive Council staff.

Drawing the Line on Standard Drinks

Alcohol is a major contributor to road accidents, and anti-social behaviour. The Standard Drink measurement tool provides a mechanism for drinkers to monitor their consumption of alcohol. The Queensland Transport/Queensland Police Service recommendation is that men and women can monitor their alcohol consumption to stay below 0.05 Blood Alcohol Consumption. Of the alcohol beverages available, it is wine which is served in glasses of varying sizes, which generally hold in excess of the 100ml standard serve.

The Drawing the Line on Standard Drinks pilot project at Sorbello's restaurant was launched in November 2001. The pilot was conducted during the Christmas/New Year period, and aimed to encourage local diners to learn about standard drink measures, and so monitor their alcohol consumption in order to stay below the 0.05 Blood Alcohol Consumption level.

Specifically the project aimed to promote the safer consumption of wine. As part of the project, Sorbello's staff and management were trained about standard drinks and the responsible service of alcohol. Selected glasses at the restaurant had a line etched at 100ml and standard drink information cards were produced for the restaurant's tables.

Evaluation of the project revealed that overall the majority of customers interviewed were surprised by the size of a standard drink. Although customers interviewed did not have a good understanding of standard drink measures, they did have a good understanding of alcohol's affect on driving and many stated they would choose not to drink any alcohol if they were the designated driver. Sorbello's staff enjoyed their involvement in the project, and were perceived by their customers as being a responsible licensed restaurant for participating in the project.

Negotiations are currently under way to trial this project at Hog's Breath Cafe (a franchised restaurant). It is hoped that if the initial trial with the restaurant is successful then the project will be adapted into their other restaurants throughout Australia.

Whitsunday Safe Schoolies Week 2001

Schoolies Week in the Whitsundays enhanced its reputation for being a safe schoolies week destination in 2001. A number of strategies were developed to maximise the fun and minimise the harm for young people celebrating the end of year twelve.

During schoolies week a Chill Out 'safe place' site operated into the early hours of each morning. Schoolies registered at the Chill Out site. Upon registration, schoolies received a wallet sized information card containing emergency numbers and a personal photo Whitsunday Schoolies ID Card. The ID card provided access to all of the planned schoolies-only events. All events were drug and alcohol free.

The new Airlie Beach Lagoon was made available to schoolies, with arrangements made for two lifeguards to be on duty all night as well as the lagoon lights for the whole week.

2001 was the biggest schoolies week ever in the Whitsunday with around 1,500 young people celebrating. There were no arrests and no major incidents all week.

Choices

The Choices project won a Silver Commissioner's Lantern award from Queensland Police Service. The project specifically targets Year 12 students who are embarking on schoolies week activities and highlights the need to be safe while still having a good time. Choices revolves around a 45 minute production acted out by members of the Conservatorium of Music, Central Queensland University highlighting the risks associated with schoolies week such as drink-driving, excessive alcohol consumption, unsafe sex, first aid, and breaking the law.

The Choices project is affiliated with the Alcohol and Injury working Party but has been running within the Mackay district high schools for the past three years.

Road Safety Working Group

An inter-sectoral group made up of representatives from Queensland Transport, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Health, Mackay City Council, Education Queensland; industry/community member and Department of Main Roads. This working group has identified the following areas for strategic action – driver fatigue, data collaboration and coordination, driver education, train crossings, target groups (especially young males), cyclists, alcohol, footpaths/bicycle paths and drug driving.

The Road Safety Working Group has assisted in the prioritisation of local road safety issues by reviewing local Hospital and Queensland Transport WebCrash 2 data. These have contributed to the design of the 2002 – 2003 Road Safety Action Plan for the Queensland Transport Central Region and in turn the State Road Safety Action Plan.

The purpose of this group (currently being discussed) is that of a reference group on road safety with smaller sub action groups forming including the existing Road Awareness Group and Bicycle Education Working Group.

Road Awareness Group

The Road Awareness Group formed in January 2002 and involves Central Queensland University, Queensland Transport, Main Roads, Local Authorities, Royal Automotive Club of Queensland, local industry and the Queensland Police Service to address the issue of fatigue on the Bruce Highway between Marlborough and Sarina. A number of actions to address this issue are currently being investigated.

Bicycle Education Working Group

The Bicycle Education Working Group includes representation from Queensland Transport, Queensland Police Service (Mackay Police Citizen Youth Club), Education Queensland and Queensland Health. The goal of the group is to establish within twelve months a sustainable means of providing a 10 hour Bike Ed program (six hours at the Mackay Police Citizen Youth Club and a four hour 'in class' component) to 50 percent of Mackay children in Year 4. To achieve this, the group has successfully applied for \$15 000 funding from the State Cycle Unit of Queensland Transport, to employ a Project Worker to facilitate this project, which will now commence in June 2002.

Andergrove Neighbourhood Watch Injury Project

The Department of Emergency Service (DES) and Queensland Police Service are working collaboratively on a pilot project in three communities across the state to broaden the focus of the existing Neighbourhood Watch crime prevention program, to incorporate the community safety initiatives of DES. Andergrove is one of the three pilot sites across the state. The project will be conducted over a three month period, from March to May 2002.

Representatives from Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Counter Disaster and Rescue Service and the Queensland Police Service will work closely with the Andergrove Neighbourhood Watch. The safety issues identified by their community will be addressed as well as providing details of how to access free services such as basic first aid, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation training, home fire safety audit and home security information. A survey to determine the current level of safety awareness has been distributed to random residents in the Andergrove community, and these responses will assist DES and Police to review the current level of safety in their community.

Andergrove was chosen as a one of the pilot locations to maximise the community safety focus created by the MWSCP.

Community Safety Week 2001

3-7 September was the inaugural Community Safety Week (instigated by the MWSCP, Mackay City Council and Mackay Crime Prevention Partnership). Community Safety Week is an initiative of the Victorian Safe Communities Network. Mackay's participation was one of two areas involved in the event outside of Victoria. The week of activities began with a 'Quest for Community Safety' Forum attended by approximately 100 people including community and agency representatives. Community safety awareness was heightened during the week by comprehensive information displays in key locations. Information available ranged from crime prevention and security issues through to falls prevention and cyclone and storm preparedness. Representatives of Domestic Violence Resource Service, Sports Medicine and Queensland Ambulance Service (who offered free child restraint safety checks) manned these displays.

Other activities during the week included free pool fence safety inspections by Mackay City Council a Drink Rite event conducted by Queensland Health, Queensland Police Service and Queensland Transport and the launches of Operation Stop Theft and GP Falls Prevention Resources.

Feedback from the services involved in community safety week revealed that they appreciated the opportunity to promote their resources and services to the community.

Both Mackay and Whitsunday are planning Community Safety Week events in 2002.

Distribution of CPR Wall Chart/Poster to new pool owners

Both Mackay and Whitsunday Councils continued providing a Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Wall Chart/Poster (provided by Queensland Health) with an accompanying letter from the MWSCP to all new pool owners. The letter congratulates the new pool owner on their acquisition, identifies ways to keep pools safe and provides local contacts for persons to access in regards to resuscitation training (as a chart is a guide only and not a substitute for essential training in resuscitation).

Proposed Second Pacific Rim Safe Communities Conference

As a result of numerous funding applications submitted to seek seeding funding to establish a conference secretariat, some funding was secured from Department of Emergency Services, Queensland Health, and Mackay City Council, with Queensland Transport also offering support for conference requirements. A funding application with the Commonwealth Government's stronger families and communities strategy is still pending. Despite accessing some funding, short time frames and the lack of an overall auspice/host organisation precluded proceeding ahead with the conference this year. As there is already an Australian National Injury Prevention Conference and a New Zealand Injury Prevention Conference in 2003, it is hoped to stage a conference in 2004 possibly under the auspices of the Australian Injury Prevention Network. It is hoped instead that later this year a representative from the World Health Organisation will visit Mackay/Whitsunday and a local safe community event will be staged.

Planned future working groups in 2002/2003

Sports Safety Working Group
Home Safety Working Group
Child Safety Working Group in Mackay

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Each member of the Project Management Team and working groups has assumed the responsibility of providing ongoing communication of the projects' progress through their own networks and updating their own organisations and workplaces.

Active components of the communication plan include:

- Information resource kit to provide to interested service providers, community members etc.
- Progress update 2 released in June 2001, next progress update planned for March 2002.
- A media log identifying media coverage of the project each month is kept. A total of 44 positive known media 'hits' were identified regarding the MWSCP or associated program over the last 12 months.
- A series of 6 media articles written by the MWSCP were printed in the Midweek newspaper. MWSCP now features on the World Health Organisation's Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion website. <http://www.phs.ki.se/csp/safecom/mackay.htm>

EVALUATION OF PROJECT

Evaluation is a planned process of the project. The evaluation will be undertaken on an annual basis and includes an interview and survey to members of working groups and the project management team. The Senior Safety Working Group, Child Safety Working Group and the Project Management Team have undergone a 12 month evaluation of the effectiveness and overall motivation of the team/groups. The result from each evaluation area is aimed to be feedback to the Project Management Team and Working Groups in March 2002 to provide direction for the next 12 months.

Project Management Team

Evaluation of the Project Management Team (PMT) was conducted in February 2001 to review group function after 12 months of participation. The methodology used assessed members' perceptions, expectations and satisfaction in order to determine the level of effectiveness of the PMT. Overall, all PMT members felt positive about this project, and seemed to enjoy the opportunity to adopt a collaborative approach in promoting a safe community within the Mackay/Whitsunday region. Most regretted that their personal contribution to the project was limited by time, however all indicated that they were committed to the group and positive about the outcome of the project.

Some members indicated concern about the sustainability of the project, and some are planning strategies to ensure the project continues in the future. From these concerns, and the dedication expressed by members it could be suggested that the PMT should review the project in terms of sustainability strategies.

At the time of this report the PMT is undergoing its second 12 month evaluation. The results from this review will again assess the PMT's effectiveness and will be compared to the results found February 2001.

Senior Safety Working Group

Evaluation of the Senior Safety Working Group occurred in September/October 2001. In regards to group dynamics all respondents were positive as to how the group was going. Group morale was only hindered in the fact that the majority of respondents felt that the group was not sufficiently prepared for meetings. Members agreed with the roles and responsibilities of the group. Specifically it was felt that the type of tasks the group became involved in should be local, should alleviate the problems faced by seniors and should be inclusive of the greatest proportion of the senior population.

Overall, people generally felt positive about being a team member. The most common feelings about being involved were rewarding; committed; enthusiastic; hopeful; happy; and new skills learnt.

From participation in the group, members felt:

- an increased knowledge of the target group and their problems
- satisfaction with the achievement of the group
- an increase in their organisational skills
- an increased ability in their group skills
- an increase in capacity building skills
- a sense of being useful to the community

Some group members felt that the group had the potential to achieve a lot more than it had and that there should be more sharing of responsibilities within the group.

The majority of the group stated that they thought the group was very effective and were satisfied that the group was achieving its goals. Achievements of the group were an increased awareness in the community and in the group of the problems facing seniors, but the major achievement stated by most team members to date was the introduction and, in some instances, the integration of senior programs into the life of their community.

Child Safety Working Group

Evaluation of the Child Safety working Group occurred in September/October 2001. The majority of participants felt that the working group was effective in getting things done, and felt that their contribution to the group was valued.

The respondents agreed that the role of the group was to investigate the public safety of children with a view to reducing injury, with the majority of members emphasising bike safety. All respondents stated that they felt their responsibility was to actively participate in the group by attending meetings and carrying out allocated tasks. Nearly all stated that they felt that it was their responsibility to participate in the meetings by bringing their knowledge, opinions and views of the organisation they represented. The members also felt responsible for dividing of tasks so as to maximise the chance that the task would be completed.

All members stated that they felt the identification of child safety issues in their community was a role of the group. Several also stated that the response to issues identified should focus on being proactive rather than reactive.

In regards to the meetings, all stated that they enjoyed the dynamics of the group. Almost all members felt that the late circulation of minutes was a problem. More than half the group felt that there was too much information distributed. All members felt they were an equal member in discussions and decisions, and were overall happy with the group process.

Overall members felt positive about being a team member. The most common feelings about being involved were committed; hopeful; rewarding; enthusiastic; excited and learning new skills.

The things the group felt they had gained from participating in the group were:

- knowledge about the extent of child cycling injuries
- a sense of satisfaction about the achievements of the group
- satisfaction from the response of children to the program
- creation of contacts with people from the community and other organisations within the community
- appreciated involvement with health promotion rather than just education

Members tended to agree that although they shared ideas with others outside the group, they did not do as much as they could.

The majority of the group felt that the group was effective in achieving its goals, however it was noted that momentum had decreased and there is a need to refocus the group. The group felt they had achieved: an increased awareness of bike safety within the 0-14 population; an increased community awareness of bike safety; and increased community involvement of child injury issues; cross-departmental cooperation; input into council planning; and a reduction in child cycling injury statistics.

Overall, members reported being very satisfied with their experiences as a group member and the accomplishments of the group. It was recognised that some members were more outwardly enthusiastic than others were but that everyone had a role.

Overall, group members appeared positive about their experiences and the nature of the group they had created. The majority felt the group had a role to play in future health promotion programs. While the slow pace frustrated some, they recognised that this was part and parcel of group decision making and discussion.

CONFERENCES

Attendance:

Paul Vardon (Project Facilitator) attended the NSW Safe Communities Symposium in October 2001. Paul also received a scholarship to attend a short course in injury prevention and epidemiology at Monash University Accident Research Centre July 2001.

Presentation:

Dale Hanson (PMT member) presented 2 oral papers at the Warnambool National Injury Prevention Conference September 2001. The papers were titled 'Addressing Bike Injuries in the Whitsundays' and 'An Ecological Approach to Injury Prevention'.

PLANNED FUTURE ACTIVITIES FOR THE MACKAY/WHITSUNDAY SAFE COMMUNITIES PROJECT

- Submit an application for accreditation as a Safe Community to the World Health Organisation (WHO)
- Possible visit from a WHO representative October/November 2002
- Postponement of Pacific Rim Safe Communities Project to 2004
- Promote MWSCP to state/national stake holders

SAFE COMMUNITIES ACCREDITATION BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

A decision was made to pursue accreditation for the MWSCP to coincide with the planned 2nd Pacific Rim Safe Communities Conference. As the conference has been postponed the PMT has decided to continue proceeding with accreditation and will be submitting an application to WHO in March/April 2002. Negotiations are under way to link accreditation with a visit planned by a WHO representative to Australia in October/November 2002.