

# MACKAY / WHITSUNDAY SAFE COMMUNITIES PROJECT (MWSCP)



## Progress Update 3 March 2002

This is the third of regular progress updates that will be released on a six monthly basis.

### Background:

As a response to above average injury rates identified in the Mackay / Whitsunday region, the MWSCP was established to address this issue and help the region become Queensland's first internationally recognised safe community.

This long-term 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 the next 4-5 years. 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.

### New Working Group

The Alcohol and Injury Working Group has met several times since August 2001, and consists of representation from Local Government (Whitsunday Shire Council), Queensland Transport, Queensland Police Service, the Liquor Licensing Division and Queensland Health (Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Services). The Group seeks to raise awareness of alcohol and injury issues, and reduce the rate of alcohol-related injury, in the Mackay/ Whitsundays. It aims to provide a forum for meaningful discussion and mutual support between agencies/ individuals engaged in activities, which promote the responsible service and/or consumption of alcohol.

The Alcohol and Injury Working Group is facilitating the progress of a number of projects, including taking a lead role in the coordination of Schoolies Week and *Drawing the Line on Standard Drinks*.



Some members of the Alcohol & Injury Working Group: L to R: Kathryn McFarlane, Dave Ferrar, Nicole Madam, Colleen Gunning.

### Drawing the Line on Standard Drinks

The *Drawing the Line on Standard Drinks* pilot project at Sorbello's Restaurant, an initiative of the Alcohol and Injury Working Group, was launched in November 2001. The pilot was conducted at Sorbello's Restaurant 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 BAC level.

Specifically the project aimed to promote the safer consumption of wine through using specially marked wine glasses. As part of the project, Sorbello's staff and management were trained about standard drinks and the responsible service of alcohol.



Colleen Gunning

Selected glasses at the restaurant had a line etched at 100ml and standard drink information cards were produced for the restaurant's tables.

### 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 12.

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 and the lagoon lights to be switched on for the whole week.

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



Schoolies enjoying the Airlie Beach Lagoon.

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**'Choices' Project Wins Silver**  
The Choices project won a Silver Commisic award from Queensland Police Service.



The project specifically targets Year 12 stude embarking on Schoolies Week activities and 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 and breaking the law, and provided them with some practical first aid strategies.

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

## New Members

MWSCP welcomes Department of Emergency Services (DES) as new key partners. Representatives of DES are now actively involved on the Project Management Team.

DES and Queensland Police Service are currently working collaboratively on a safe communities project which will broaden the focus of the existing Neighbourhood Watch crime prevention program, to incorporate the community safety initiatives of DES. Andergrove is one of the pilot sites. 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 to address whatever safety issues that are identified in their community, and will provide details of how to access free services such as basic first aid, CPR 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 one of the pilot locations to maximise the community safety focus created by the MWSCP.

## GP Falls 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 and overwhelming evidence that falls are now responsible for more hospitalisations each year than motor vehicle accidents. 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.

## WHO website

Mackay/Whitsunday Safe Communities Project now features on the World Health Organisation's website-  
<http://www.phs.ki.se/csp/safecom/mackay.htm>



September 3-7 was the inaugural Community Safety Week (an initiative of Mackay/Whitsunday Safe Communities Project, Mackay City Council and Mackay Crime Prevention Partnership).

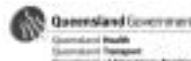
The week of activities began with a 'Quest for Community Safety' Forum attended by approximately 100 people including community and agency representatives. Community safety awareness was heightened during the week by comprehensive information displays in key locations. Information available ranged from 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) staffed 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.

## Planned future Safe Communities activities include:

- Possible visit by WHO in October/November 2002
- Mackay/Whitsunday to submit an application to become an accredited WHO Safe Community, thus stating ongoing commitment to injury prevention
- Community Safety Week September 2002
- PCYC and Queensland Transport coordination for bike safety in Mackay
- The Alcohol and Injury Working Group will be focussing on issues in the Mackay central business district.

*To find out more, to be involved, or to let the project management team know of existing local injury prevention and safety promotion activities please contact the project facilitator: Ms Kathryn McFarlane, Health Promotion Officer, Tropical Public Health Unit – Mackay, Queensland Health phone: 4968 3858, or email: [Kathryn\\_Mcfarlane@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Kathryn_Mcfarlane@health.qld.gov.au)*



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