



*Empowering young people*  
*Promoting Safer Choices*  
*Building Stronger Communities*  
[www.youthsolutions.com.au](http://www.youthsolutions.com.au)



# Youth Solutions Annual Report

## 2011 – 2012



Funded by NSW Health and South Western Sydney Local Health District



## President's Report Tony Ross

Edgar Allen Poe said 'There is an eloquence in true enthusiasm'.

As an essential ingredient in any organisation, enthusiasm paired with dedication sums up the attitude and the efforts from the Board, staff and volunteers of Youth Solutions over the past 12 months. Confronted by our yearly challenges of funding, time, lack of resources and a growing region with high demands for services and programs to support our community, I believe we can truly celebrate the 2011 – 2012 year and what it has offered.

I would like to acknowledge the incredible effort from our Chief Executive Officer, Geraldine Dean who has shown fantastic leadership throughout the year. This is Geraldine's first year as CEO and I know I reflect the sentiment of the Board in saying that she is doing an outstanding job.

Staff members; Dan Lea – Program Coordinator, Kate Angelucci – Program Officer, Brooke Manzione – Social Marketing and Community Relations, Sue Willoughby – Executive Support Officer and Shannon McEwan – Executive Support Officer, Finance have worked tirelessly throughout the year to produce quality programs, campaigns and services.

This year in particular, we saw generous support surround the service more than ever before. *The Rotary Club of Narellan, The Campbelltown Catholic Club, BTIG, The Protectors Insurance Brokers, Macarthur Credit Union*

and *IMB Community Foundation* played a major role in funding projects and campaigns throughout the year.

I also want to mention the local media - *Macarthur Chronicle, Macarthur Advertiser, Camden Advertiser* and *C91.3FM* for their enthusiasm in keeping the community updated and continuously putting their hand up to support us. I encourage you to continue reading this report for a full list of our generous corporate sponsors for the year as each and every one of them has made an impact. Thank you.

We have also seen a major amount of bipartisan support from our local, state and federal politicians. Thank you to our elected representatives for assisting us in keeping our young people safer in the community.

Humbled by the great work of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) I would like to congratulate the 16 young people that have put in an enormous amount of effort this year. A special mention must be given to 'Give Us a Hand', a campaign the YAG developed and implemented with the support from our staff and the funding body for the project, *IMB Community Foundation*.

They received positive feedback from schools, local entertainers, businesses and organisations. Impressively, this campaign was supported by the Minister of School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, the Honorable Peter Garrett MP and the Minister for Health, The Honorable Jillian Skinner MP. I look forward to seeing new YAG projects in the New Year.

I would like to take this opportunity to officially farewell Kylie Powell, our Vice President from 2010 – 2011 and thank Kylie for her outstanding contribution to the Board. We also welcome our newer members Jodie Dench, Belinda McLean and more recently Rebecca Whitford. Jodie is dedicated to providing opportunities for young people in our region and brings to the Board her experience as Community Project Officer for Youth at Camden Council. Belinda is Managing Director of HR Focus and offers a wide range of skills in human resources. Rebecca brings with her a wealth of experience in the drug and alcohol field as a former Youth Solutions team member and now teacher at TAFE NSW. I officially welcome Jodie, Belinda and Rebecca and look forward to working with them over the next 12 months.

Finally I would like to thank our dedicated Board for their hard work. We have such a diverse group of people that volunteer their time throughout the year to enhance and support Youth Solutions. Thank you for your commitment and valuable contributions.

*I look forward to sharing more success with the Board, staff and volunteers at Youth Solutions over the next 12 months and wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and safe festive season.*



## CEO's Report **Geraldine Dean**

As I wrap up my first year as Chief Executive Officer, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated Board and Executive for their guidance, support and patience throughout the year. It really is a pleasure to work with such a diverse group of professionals who dedicate their time to Youth Solutions and ultimately, work hard to keep our young people safer in our region.

In addition to the Board I would like to extend my personal thank you to my team. Although a new team, we have an incredible mix of skills and a combined passion for the Service, young people and our community. There is certainly a depth of history within our Service that we can continually draw upon. I truly believe we have a group of individuals who will effectively contribute to making positive changes in our community in prevention and health promotion.

Also, our Youth Advisory Group has gone above and beyond their duty and really contributed to the success of our Service this year. We now have 16 members with each one of them offering something unique. Thank you for your passion and commitment to supporting fellow young people in Macarthur and Wingecarribee.

With the accreditation process kick starting our year, we were delighted to announce that we achieved Quality Improvement Council (QIC) National Accreditation for the next three years. Not only was the process a fantastic learning opportunity for our team, but also a chance to gain feedback from our reviewers. I was particularly proud when our accreditors praised us for doing 'a lot with a little' and reassured our team that our Service was doing great work in our community.

In July, we had our 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Charity Event, Latin Fiesta...feel the rhythm and it certainly was a night to remember. In particular it was another event where we saw the community rally in support of our Service and share a meal, colourful entertainment and great company. We are looking forward to Charity Night 2013!

Another highlight for the year was the revision of our website, a project proudly funded by the *Macarthur Credit Union*. After months of work and with the overwhelming support of our Youth Advisory Group and dedicated staff, we can't wait to continue sharing information with our community and develop our online presence.

We are passionate about giving our young people and those who support them all of the avenues and information they need to assist them.

This website along with our Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts will all contribute to ensuring we are doing everything we can to become an accessible service in our community.

As we reflect on the Service's achievements of the last financial year, I am pleased to report that Youth Solutions has focused on implementing our Operational Plan 2011 – 2012. We have faced challenges that included the revision of the strategic direction of the Service as well as the usual stretch of our resources. Through these challenges we have been committed to working closely with NSW Health and South Western Sydney Local Health District to ensure synergy in the delivery of specific programs and services.

As Tony has mentioned, it is important that we also acknowledge the importance of our partnerships. As a result of substantial growth and continual high demand for the service, it is necessary that we work in collaboration and continue to reach out to our community. Our partnerships with local schools, local councils and other community services are incredibly important to us. Working in collaboration means we are strengthening our community together one step at a time.

I'd also like to acknowledge the new networking group we are involved in, *AOD link* which has been developed as a consultative group with a proactive focus to develop, organise and implement ideas around drugs and alcohol. We are thrilled to be working closely with other organisations as part of this group to form or give advice on projects and advocate for the local LGAs.

I would like to join Tony in his thanks to our fantastic corporate partners over the last year and the incredible support we have received from our elected representatives. Thank you for your generosity and dedication to the young people in our community.

For the next 12 months, I know I reflect the team's excitement when I say we are thrilled to get our three new projects, PEEP, YARN and School Solutions, off the ground. We are incredibly proud of these projects and look forward to seeing them come to life over the next year.

Please keep reading this report for more highlights and details of our featured projects from 2011 – 2012. Don't forget to keep your eyes on our new website ([www.youthsolutions.com.au](http://www.youthsolutions.com.au)) and make sure you stay connected by liking us on Facebook or following us on Twitter.

*I'd like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year. As we say... 'Celebrate Safe. No Regrets'.*



## Referral and Resources

Over the last 12 months, July 2011 – June 2012, points of contact for referral and information have included:

Direct contact with over 1090 people via presentations, events, workshops, surveys and consultations

Distribution of 24 131 drug and alcohol resources and information through schools, local government, community services, events, local businesses and licensed premises

Seven newsletters have been distributed to 800 subscribers

61 430 visits to [www.youthsolutions.com.au](http://www.youthsolutions.com.au) (maintaining same traffic from the previous year)

106 contacts with the local media Macarthur Advertiser, Macarthur Chronicle and C91.3FM and 79 of these have resulted in an article or interview. (75% of all intended stories were published)

# Projects and Activities 2011 - 2012

## Youth Participation Project (Give Us a Hand)

Proudly funded by *IMB Community Foundation*, our Youth Advisory Group (YAG) were very busy this year creating their multimedia campaign. With the first stage of the Youth Participation Project focusing on gathering research data and collating information about specific drug issues in the Macarthur region, our YAG was set the task to create a campaign around one of the major topics of concern. From this, 'giveusahand.org.au' was born with the message *WRECKreational Drugs...don't let them wreck your night*.

Launched in April, 'Give Us a Hand' received support from local schools, media, community organisations, and our local elected representatives. Our YAG were also particularly excited when the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, The Hon Peter Garrett MP re-tweeted the campaign to his 16,700 followers and the UN Youth Australia promoted the campaign to their 1,400 followers.

The campaign utilises a micro website that enables users to create a virtual hand, share it on their Facebook and Twitter and submit it to Youth Solutions with a message of support. The campaign has generated comments like; 'fantastic concept, keep up the great work', 'young people can do so much better with a clear head', 'drugs suck' 'say no to drugs' 'this campaign is powerful and I will be encouraging my students to create hands'.

## Website project

Late last year, Youth Solutions acknowledged that with the technological advancements particularly used by young people, our current website needed to be updated to become an accessible platform for young people and all who support them.

In September 2011, we received funding from the *Macarthur Credit Union* to revise our current website to make it more youth friendly and also develop an interactive game for the site that engages our young people.

The team are thrilled to be launching our new site in November 2012 and look forward to sharing information with the community and providing effective services to assist and help our young people make positive choices.



## Youth Week

National Youth Week was on again in April and our team were busy running *DECKed out heART* in partnership with *Muru Nanga Mai*, *The Three Sixty Project* and local Aboriginal artist *Danielle Mate*. This project saw Aboriginal young people from Camden create designs on skateboard decks whilst participating in a drug and alcohol workshop.

Our YAG, in partnership with youth advisory groups from Macarthur and Wingecarribee, participated in the REPresent Regional Youth Forum which saw young people discussing and raising issues surrounding their peers. These issues were raised in front of a panel of our elected representatives who spent the day listening to issues of concern.

We are looking forward to the forum next year, to reflect on the issues raised and create solutions to benefit the young people in our community.

## Student Placement

As a Service we pride ourselves on our ability to give young people opportunities to develop their skills and do their work placement here at Youth Solutions. Over the past 12 months we have had seven work placement students offering a range of skills and interests. We are delighted that we could assist them in their studies and thank them for their outstanding contribution to our Service.

## Safer Celebrations

### Who Carries the Responsibility?

#### Celebrate Safe. No Regrets

Now in its third stage, the safer celebrations project with the *Campbelltown Catholic Club* has seen Youth Solutions engaging with young people and the *Campbelltown Catholic Club* community in distributing safe partying messages. 'Who Carries the Responsibility?' distributed over 14,000 resources and was launched at a Justice Crew Concert in December 2011 in front of 500 young people aged 12 - 18. The 2012 campaign 'Celebrate Safe. No Regrets' will involve a larger research component with the aim to collect 300 - 500 surveys about alcohol, young people and celebration trends in Macarthur.

## Young Aboriginal Resource Network (YARN)

The Young Aboriginal Resource Network (YARN) project has been created to develop an Aboriginal youth advisory group to advise on the needs of the Aboriginal population within Macarthur, specifically with issues surrounding alcohol.

This project involves and engages young Aboriginal people, 15 - 25 years of age, to identify binge drinking and drug related harms in their community, and develop appropriate strategies to address these issues.

We are in the process of engaging young people so we can focus on developing strategies that promote a supportive environment for young Aboriginal people in our community.

The team are excited to partner with *Muru Nanga Mai*, *The Three Sixty Project* and local Aboriginal Artist Danielle Mate from *DJ Mate*, to run art based workshops in the New Year to engage with the young Aboriginal community.



## Peer Enrichment and Empowerment Project (PEEP)

This is a new project for Youth Solutions, and has had a positive start so far. Currently, the team are working on developing a training program for the Youth Advisory Group and other interested young people 15 - 25 years of age from the Macarthur and Wingecarribee region.

With an aim to develop skills in a range of areas such as public speaking, positive decision making, computer skills, budget management, project management, working with the media, business networking, leadership, conflict resolution and resume writing, we have already gathered interest from businesses to assist us in executing these workshops as part of the PEEP project.

PEEP acknowledges the importance of peer education when it comes to communicating messages to young people. Ultimately, this project aims to develop a community campaign and create a peer led drug and alcohol resource to take effect over the next 2 years.

## School Solutions

Over the last 12 months, Youth Solutions have increased their work with Schools in the Macarthur and Wingecarribee regions. Due to a significant amount of requests for our project team to visit schools and run workshops around drug and alcohol, we have created a project for Schools and educational institutes that address issues such as: peer pressure, mental health, communication breakdown, and mood/thinking by building resilience.

Youth Solutions will engage with young people, teachers and parents to instigate change regarding anti-social and risk taking behaviours. Using a whole of school approach, Youth Solutions can create a strong, supportive community for young people to become more successful in their lives.



# Community Events 2011 - 2012

## Drug Action Week

*Drug Action Week (DAW) 2012* saw communities across Australia join together to raise awareness of alcohol and other drugs issues.

Youth Solutions partnered with *Lifeline Macarthur* and *The Drug and Alcohol Women's Network (DAWN)* and put together an interactive information stall that ran from 4pm – 7pm at Macarthur Square Shopping Centre on Thursday Night 21 June.

As drugs and alcohol are a concern in our community, we need to do everything we can to provide information and awareness to support young people. *Drug Action Week* is a great initiative from the Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA) and we are proud to partner with other services in our region to support it.

## DJ Mate – New Beginnings

Local Aboriginal artist, Danielle Mate raised \$1,840 for Youth Solutions through her exhibition 'New Beginnings' which showcased her unique artwork throughout July at the Ferguson Gallery, Camden Civic Centre. Danielle and her husband Shane, sold raffle tickets for a custom made DJ Mate artwork worth \$1,000. Danielle also displayed artwork at our Charity Event and donated 40% of sales on the night. Danielle has become a great friend of our Service and we hope to work with her more in 2013.

## McDonald's Charity Fun Night

The *McDonald's Charity Fun Night* was held on Wednesday 4 April once again in support of Youth Solutions. Our staff and volunteers got behind the counters, poured drinks and made burgers under the generous guidance of the *McDonald's in Macarthur* staff. With 10% of all sales generated between 3pm – 5pm and 6pm - 8pm donated to Youth Solutions, the event raised \$3,030. Thanks to all of our volunteers who helped us on the night!

## Charity Night 2012

Youth Solutions hosted their 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Charity Event at The Cube, Campbelltown Catholic Club and the team couldn't be happier with the result. With just over 300 guests in attendance the event brought together local businesses and community members to support young people in preventing drug and alcohol related harm.

Staying true to the Latin Theme, colourful table arrangements, a delicious three course meal and rhythmic entertainment from *Club Havana* were just some of the highlights from the evening. Thank you to all of our Charity Event Sponsors and Supporters. *(Please read on for a full list of our corporate partners and sponsors).*

## Goulburn to Camden Corporate Charity Challenge

The *Campbelltown Catholic Club* and *Aquafit Fitness and Leisure Centre* raised \$16,650 for Youth Solutions after the Goulburn to Camden Corporate Charity Challenge last month.

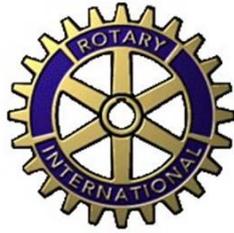
On Sunday 16 September the *Campbelltown Catholic Club/Aquafit* team of 10 riders began the cycle challenge in Goulburn at 5.50am and finished in Camden five hours later.

The Goulburn to Sydney (Camden) Corporate Charity Challenge event was held before the renowned Goulburn to Sydney (Camden) Cycle Classic race which just celebrated its 110th anniversary. Both the charity ride and the race finish in the main street of Camden as part of the Camden Street Festival.

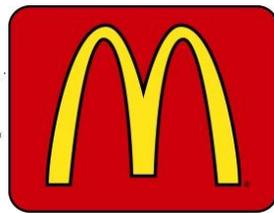
## Charity Golf Day

The *Protectors Insurance Brokers* have raised an incredible \$150,000 over 10 years for Youth Solutions. This year will be the 'encore year' with the final golf day happening on 4 December 2012 at Macquarie Links International Golf Course. This will be the 11th year *The Protectors Insurance Brokers* have been part of the Youth Solutions Corporate Partnership Program.

## Corporate Partners



Rotary Club of Narellan



McDonald's in Macarthur



## Corporate Supporters

- The Rotary Club of Narellan
- ANZ Banking Group
- Bella Arts
- BTIG
- C91.3FM
- Campbelltown Catholic Club
- Coutts Conveyancing & Legal Services
- Danielle Mate, DJ Mate
- Event Cinemas, Campbelltown
- Grimes Finance and Mortgages
- IMB Community Foundation
- Macarthur Chronicle
- Macarthur Credit Union
- MayTek IT Solutions
- McDonald's In Macarthur
- Sleepdoctor Campbelltown
- holysheet! Campbelltown
- Snap Printing Campbelltown and Ingleburn
- The Logistics Department
- The Protectors Insurance Brokers



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