



# Newsletter

## October 2015

COONAMBLE ALCOHOL AND DRUG INITIATIVE

### CADI ACTION

**Strong Families Action Group** - led by Jo Ellis, Mackillop Rural Community Services and Annette Sim, community member. This group is focussed on children, young people and families and meets fortnightly to tackle complex issues raised by the community. There are many impacts of drugs and alcohol on children, young people and families. The group's challenge has been to select a tangible concern that can be addressed locally. After examining the issues the group will address the problem of children being exposed to drugs and alcohol, in their home environment, during school hours. Consequences of the current situation include poor educational (and longer term employment) outcomes, chronic absenteeism and intergenerational trauma.

The group's effort will now focus on a new way of working with children and families in conjunction with the broader community. Together with families, schools and support agencies the group will aim to provide a new path for children to grow into strong, healthy young adults.

The Strong Families Action Group also recognised the need to continue developing connections with children while they work on the longer term issues. With this in mind a JAM (Just Add Music) session was held at MacKillop Rural Community Services. Forty children, young people and community members enjoyed connecting with each other through music.

**Services Action Group** - led by Amy Jones, Coonamble High School. The CADI groups, and community, need a clear picture of how drugs and alcohol affects our residents. The community sees what is happening but, at the moment, we don't have "facts and figures" to support our work. The Services Action Group has commenced developing a tool and method for local organisations to capture and share data. The challenge for this group is to develop a user friendly tool that captures relevant data. What is relevant data? This is the information that will tell us what drugs are being used and their effects on the well being of our community members.

CADI is a community driven initiative taking a different approach to addressing drug and alcohol issues. CADI's shared vision is-

**To improve the wellbeing  
of the Coonamble  
Shire community through  
reducing harms  
caused by Drug and  
Alcohol Abuse**

*"Never doubt that a  
small group of  
thoughtful, commit-  
ted citizens can  
change the world.*

*Indeed, it is the only  
thing that ever has".*

Margaret Mead

**AOD Treatment Action Group** - led by Bobby Jones, Coonamble Aboriginal Health Service. The absence of access to rehabilitation services is a community concern. While the AOD Treatment group would like to magically produce a conveniently located rehabilitation centre, this is not a realistic option. The group's work, to date, has been about identifying other options for supporting people who are seeking treatment.

The group is currently focussed on two issues; treatment beds and support groups. Investigating the provision of treatment beds in specific rehabilitation centres is a new way of looking at accessing services. Closer to home, developing cross-agency support groups for drug and alcohol users, and their families, is underway.

**Crime and Justice Action Group** - led by Trish Butler, Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Corporation. Examining issues related to police/community communication and trust. The group is exploring avenues for safe and strong engagement between the broader community and local police.

### Beyond the Shire

September marked the release of new research, *Child and adolescent exposure to alcohol advertising in Australia's major televised sports*, which examined alcohol advertising in televised Australian Football League (AFL), Cricket and National Rugby League (NRL). It found an estimated cumulative audience of 26.9 million Australian children and adolescents watching these sports are exposed to 51 million instances of alcohol advertising, with nearly half (47%) of these broadcast during daytime programming between 6am and 8.30pm.

### Get the Facts

What Is Drug Addiction? Addiction is a chronic, often relapsing brain disease that causes compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences to the addicted individual and to those around him or her. Although the initial decision to take drugs is voluntary for most people, the brain changes that occur over time challenge an addicted person's self-control and hamper his or her ability to resist intense impulses to take drugs.

Similar to other chronic, relapsing diseases, such as diabetes, asthma, or heart disease, drug addiction can be managed successfully. And as with other chronic diseases, it is not uncommon for a person to relapse and begin abusing drugs again. Relapse, however, does not signal treatment failure—rather, it indicates that treatment should be reinstated or adjusted or that an alternative treatment is needed to help the individual regain control and recover (National Institute on Drug Abuse).

## What is

### Collective Impact?

The CADI initiative is guided by emerging international thinking about new ways in which communities, government and business can work together to address complex social issues. The *Collective Impact* framework involves moving away from groups working in isolation with a focus on a common agenda, shared measurement and activities that are aligned to a population level goal.

The approach involves cross-sector action groups working on projects with the support of a backbone organisation. The backbone organisation is responsible for the guidance and overall coordination of the action groups.

*If we do what we've  
always done.... We  
will get what we've  
always got!*