

It has been a productive quarter for Investing In Our Youth (IIOY) as we continue to make gains in our key focus areas of:

- Young people and alcohol
- Early years' advocacy
- Support for child and youth development programs
- Support for child and youth mental health

This quarter we are pleased to announce new partnerships with Telethon and Bendigo Bank and new support from established partners Lotterywest.

We could not operate without supportive partnerships and the direction provided by our volunteer Board of Management. The IIOY Board is chaired by Prof Rhonda Oliver and manned by Alan Kidd, Mark Jennings, Janelle Leiper, Lisa Glover, June Foulds, Karen Collins, Steve Denton, Amanda Taylor and Amelia McDermott.

*For more information*

T 9721 6951

E [iioy@iinet.net.au](mailto:iioy@iinet.net.au)

[www.investinginouryouth.com.au](http://www.investinginouryouth.com.au)



Investing In Our Youth has recently been notified of Telethon's support for the Be Alcohol Aware project. Great news! This will be in the form of a grant to be used during 2013 to support community alcohol awareness activities.

The Be Alcohol Aware project aims to use the skills of young people to increase alcohol awareness and reduce the incidence of under-age drinking. The target group for the project is young people aged 12-17 years in the South West region and their parents.

Project strategies include:

- Administering a community alcohol awareness fund to provide opportunities for young people across the region to be involved in alcohol awareness activities developed for young people (funding capped at \$1,000 per activity)
- Providing successful applicants with government approved information (e.g. information on standard drinks, party responsibilities, national alcohol guidelines) to ensure that initiatives are based on current best practice information
- Promoting the funding opportunity to government and nongovernment organisations who come in contact with adolescents e.g. schools, PCYC's, local government youth development workers, not for profit organisations
- Setting up a steering group to review applications, assist applicants and offer advice and links to resources.
- Developing partnerships with local media representatives to further promote approved alcohol awareness facts and messages
- Recording, reporting and evaluating community alcohol awareness activities

Applications are reviewed on a monthly basis. Guidelines and applications can be accessed on the IIOY web site.



**Like a local project. Make it happen.**

Investing In Our Youth is one of three lucky local organisations selected by Bendigo Bank to feature in their 'like a local project' campaign.

Bendigo Bank really like supporting local communities and have contributed over \$11million back into local WA community projects and initiatives nationally. Bendigo Bank is celebrating by asking the public to vote for their favourite local community project.

Investing In Our Youth's project involves setting up a competition for young people to promote alcohol guidelines through a poster and YouTube competition.

**To show your support and vote for this great project, simply visit Bendigo Bank on Facebook or drop into the Bunbury branch of Bendigo Bank at 7 Stirling Street.**

*\*Please note voting commences on the 1 May 2013 through to 31 May.*

It's easy, jump onto the Bendigo Bank Facebook page, click on the WA Competition tab and vote for our youth alcohol project. You could also be in the running to win \$5,000 from Bendigo Bank.

**For children and young people less than 18 years of age, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.**



Investing In Our Youth is fortunate to have gained the support of Lotterywest to secure the services of a marketing consultant to help us improve our profile.

The consultant will work with us to move through the following tasks: review our promotional tools; develop a membership plan; update our website; develop signage; assess social marketing opportunities and create policies, procedures and content directions.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the organisation, and we look forward to working with local identity Beth Ferguson of Main Event Media to achieve a new look and increase the effectiveness of our organisation.

## Youth Mental Health Project Update

Regional Youth Mental Health Development Officer Louise Fischer has settled well into her role and has been able to identify priority directions in the field of mental health (early intervention and prevention) that will benefit children and young people in the South West.

One of Louise's tasks has been to search the latest findings on neuroplasticity and discover how experiences in the early years can impact brain development.

Louise's search has also led her to locate evidence based tools and strategies that can help support families.

These efforts have led to the development of a two stage plan: 1) raise awareness of neuroplasticity and how this knowledge can be used to enhance young children's learning experiences and healthy development, and 2) access (and

hopefully trial) tools that have the capacity to support children's healthy development.

A second priority direction identified by Louise is the issue of self-injury (known as self-harm). IIOY is currently exploring the possibility of bringing accredited training to the SW for youth service providers. We will endeavor to promote dates and other details on this opportunity late in 2013.

Meanwhile visit Louise's blog to access the latest releases regarding child and youth mental health.

<http://investinginouryouth.wordpress.com>

The Regional Youth Mental Health Development position is supported by the South West Development Commission and the Mental Health Commission.



Government of Western Australia  
Mental Health Commission

## Child and Parent Centre Carey Park

The Bunbury community will soon have its own Child and Parent Centre. The centre will offer programs and services that support parents and help children develop and learn in their early years.

Conveniently located at Carey Park Primary School, the Centre will have family-friendly facilities and cater to the needs of local parents and their children.

The centre coordinator Annette Owen is now working with parents, schools and organisations to find out what programs and services are needed and wanted in the community.

If you live locally and would like to submit your ideas regarding

programs and services for families with young children, please email Annette Owen during the month of May on [annette.owen@iinet.net.au](mailto:annette.owen@iinet.net.au)

## In Brief

### HANDS UP 4 KIDS

A dedicated steering group continues to meet to support the further development and implementation of the HANDS UP 4 KIDS (HU4K) volunteer reading program. Community volunteers attend a local primary school where they listen to young children read aloud. If you have an interest in volunteering or would like more information on HU4K please contact project coordinator Jan Akaczonok.

T 9725 8657

[E handsup4kids@gmail.com](mailto:Ehandsup4kids@gmail.com)

### Bunbury Early Years Directory

Investing in Our Youth has released the 2013 brief Bunbury early years directory. You can download your own copy by 'googling' Investing In Our Youth and clicking on the 'resources and publications' side bar.



## National Simultaneous Story time 2013

Join Carey Park Primary and other local schools and libraries in encouraging more young Australians to read and enjoy books by participating in National Simultaneous Story time on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

<http://www.alia.org.au/nss/>

## Schools of the Future Network Meeting

A 'Schools of the Future' network meeting is scheduled for 8am on Wednesday May 22 and will be held at the Hudson Road Community Health Centre.

The meeting will include a presentation by Louise Fischer on neuroplasticity, how early experiences can influence brain development, and possible tools and strategies to enhance healthy development in young children.

## Acknowledgements

We gratefully recognise the ongoing support received from corporate members Mission Australia and Cristal.

Corporate members spread their support across all our efforts to promote the healthy development of children and young people in the South West.



## DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS

### New Department Mergers

The State Government has recently announced changes to many government operations. This includes several departmental mergers.

The Drug and Alcohol Office will amalgamate with the Mental Health Commission, and the Department of Local Government will merge with the Department for Communities.

The Premier said that the changes to the Drug and Alcohol Office were made in response to the findings of the Stokes Report which highlighted the issues facing the mental health system including the need for improved liaison between mental health and drug and alcohol

services worker willingness to co-operatively provide care and intervention for patients with dual conditions.

The merger of the Department for Local Government and the Department for Communities was said to be a logical step to encourage better collaboration to deliver services at a local level.

The Department of Local Government was formerly the Stage agency responsible for promoting strong sustainable local government while the Department for Communities provided a wide range of programs and services in partnership with community organisations.

### Commissioner Calls for Investment in Youth Diversion Programs

The WA Commissioner for Children and Young People Michelle Scott has recently released her updated *Youth Justice* issues paper which outlines her views on what is required to deliver better results for WA children, young people, families and the broader community.

"The statistics and evidence is clear – over many years WA has not invested sufficiently in staff, resources and diversion programs to address the underlying causes of young people's offending behaviour and protect the community" the Commissioner said.

"This is why between mid-2008 and mid-2012 the number of young people in detention in WA has increased, whereas some other Australian states have declining numbers of young people in detention."

The Commissioner called for the community to do all they could to provide children and young people with the opportunity to get their young lives back on track.

Recommendations include:

- A rapid increase in services and programs, including mental health, employment, drug and alcohol, and education, to address the underlying causes of young people's offending behaviour.
- Establishing a network of community-based safe houses where at-risk children can seek refuge.
- Funding for culturally-appropriate programs to address the significant over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in contact with the justice system.
- Ensuring a State-wide 24 hour bail service for young people.
- Rapid expansion of the forensic mental health service currently being trialed at the Children's Court.
- Investment in education, training, mental health and drug and alcohol programs for young people in detention, aimed at reducing recidivism.

The full *Youth Justice* issues paper is available at <http://apo.org.au/research/youth-justice>

### Pathways to Literacy Conference (ECU Bunbury)

A South West Early Childhood Conference that aims to support literacy development in the early years will be held on June 22 at Edith Cowan University Bunbury.

More information and conference registrations forms can be accessed by contacting Sharon Cousens: [Sharon.Cousens@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:Sharon.Cousens@education.wa.edu.au)