
STRICTLY EMBARGOED until 10am Friday, August 24, 2007

\$2.85 MILLION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Two key programs to prevent and reduce substance misuse among young Aboriginal people will be rolled out in South Australia thanks to a \$2.85 million partnership announced today.

The agreement, which comprises \$2.1 million from the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AER) and \$750,000 in State Government funding, is the third highest grant in the Foundation's history. Under the arrangement, AER will sponsor the *Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands: Celebrating Healthy Communities* initiative and the *Wiltanendi...Becoming Stronger Program* in the metropolitan area.

Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Minister Jay Weatherill said AER's contribution supported the Government's commitment to provide real solutions to address substance misuse and its impact on individuals and communities.

"In the last 18 months, petrol sniffing on the APY Lands has reduced by 60 per cent," Mr Weatherill said. "This is a major step forward but we still have a lot of work to do in tackling drug and alcohol misuse, particularly in remote communities.

"The APY Lands program uses the arts as a way of engaging young Aboriginal people and encouraging and supporting them to channel their energy into more positive and productive activities.

"Led by Carclew Youth Arts, it will work closely with the APY communities to provide arts and culture workshops for young people to prevent them turning to alcohol and drugs. The venture will also build career pathways for them, furthering their education and career choices and helping them reach their full potential."

Mr Weatherill said the Wiltanendi program, led by Drug and Alcohol Services SA (DASSA), also focussed on linking young people with opportunities to turn their lives around.

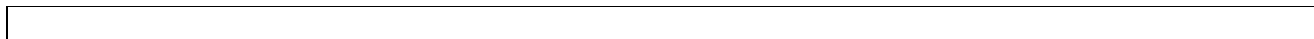
"This program, for 15 to 20 year-olds - involves professionals working one-on-one and intensely with young Aboriginal people, some who may already be engaging with inner city support services, to address the issues leading to substance misuse."

AER Chair Professor Ian Webster said the Foundation was committed to a partnership approach in improving substance misuse awareness and prevention programs. "AER is pleased to see a major focus of the projects on communities in rural areas," Prof Webster said.

"I am confident that these projects will greatly contribute to and strengthen existing efforts in reducing substance-related harm in our community in line with the Foundation's key strategic objectives of changing community attitudes to drinking."

AER was established in October 2001 to address prevention, treatment, research and rehabilitation for the misuse of alcohol as well as paint, petrol and glue sniffing.

Commissioner for Social Inclusion, Monsignor David Cappo, said the new agreement built on a partnership set up in 2005 between the AER and the State Government, led by the Social Inclusion Board.



“This partnership is testament to the value of government, non-government and community organisations working together to improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable young people,” he said.

“Most importantly, these programs are also committed to working closely with the Aboriginal community, including elders, to engage with young people and keep them connected.

“The impact of drug misuse cannot be underestimated. Many times, these issues are inter-generational and result in crime and abuse. These initiatives will be critical to stopping this spiral effect.

“The Social Inclusion Board will work with those involved to promote this ‘joined-up’ approach to improve outcomes for these young people, their families and communities.”

Media Note: The Alcohol Education Rehabilitation (AER) Foundation and SA Government Policy Partnership Launch will be held TODAY, Friday, August 24 from 9.30am at Carclew Youth Arts, 11 Jeffcott St, North Adelaide.

For further information contact Simon Hatcher on 0419 780 071.

