

Beneficiary case study



Youth worker training program

Anex's Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) training program will give 50 Victorian youth outreach workers increased knowledge, skills and confidence to provide harm reduction strategies for young people

ATS include methamphetamine, ecstasy, cocaine and some pharmaceuticals, such as dexamphetamine and the prescription drug Ritalin.

Anex CEO John Ryan said young ATS users typically use these drugs with alcohol and are prone to a range of risk behaviours.

“Its an unfortunate fact that young ATS users risk contracting sexually transmitted infections resulting from unsafe sex, developing mental health concerns, driving whilst drug affected and being involved in violent and aggressive incidences,” Mr Ryan said.

The training program will be specifically tailored to address ATS use in young people living throughout regional Victoria.

Mr Ryan said the aim of the project was for youth workers to have a better knowledge of available information resources for ATS use along with improved skills and confidence to deal with ATS use by the young people they work with.

Anex will also support the outreach workers with information provided through Anex publications such as the Anex Bulletin, the Anex website and an electronic information exchange. Anex's training department also provides ongoing telephone support.



*FebFast Director John Nguyen presents a cheque
To Anex's CEO John Ryan and President Amanda Millege*

Beneficiary case study



Online communications for Indigenous Youth

The Australian Drug Foundation thanks FebFast and all of its supporters for their continued support.

The FebFast partnership has enabled the ADF to increase access to, and use of, Somazone (the ADF's youth website) by young Indigenous people.

Based on a number of consultations and responses to a survey of Indigenous young people conducted earlier in the year, several features targeting Indigenous Australians are currently being incorporated into the Somazone website including:

- a list of searchable Indigenous services included in the Somazone directory of 'youth-friendly' health services and
- Indigenous artwork.

A number of promotional activities are accompanying the website enhancements. During NAIDOC Week in July 2009, ADF staff distributed colourful Somazone-branded helium balloons and music vouchers to the young people present at the march through Melbourne. New Indigenous-designed posters and postcards are currently being designed and will be distributed to Indigenous health services throughout Australia.

The ADF has identified the need to extend our services to indigenous communities and service providers and without FebFast's support this will not be possible. The ADF values FebFast's contributions and thanks everyone involved.

Beneficiary case study



Online counseling support for kids

Family Drug Support's (FDS) Youth Drug Support project is developing an informative website focussing on a range of drug and alcohol and related issues whilst also providing a confidential email query service.

The emphasis of the information is to educate young people with up to date information that allows them to make choices to reduce the risks associated with drinking and drug taking. FDS doesn't condone drug use but believes that empowering young people with the relevant facts enables them to make decisions to keep themselves and their friends safe. FDS also acknowledges that not all young people who choose to use drugs or drink alcohol do it in a way that is problematic.

Family Drug Support CEO, Tony Trimmingham OAM, said that young people don't readily access support, help and information via traditional telephone help lines as often as they once might have.

"Internet and text are more likely to be the mode for accessing help and information these days," he said.

"The benefit of this service is that young people particularly for those in rural, regional and isolated communities who would not or could not contact support services or ask for advice are able to access this service over the internet without having to be identified."

FDS have included information for young carers who are often a forgotten group living with and managing these issues on a day to day basis and endeavouring to still stay engaged in the community and maintain their schooling, time with friends and regular interests and activities.

The site will include:

- A public bulletin/message board for online and ongoing discussion.
- Information about living with combined mental health and drug and or alcohol issues,
- User friendly evidence based fact sheets and harm minimisation information,
- Information regarding special youth events including events run by other NGO and community groups, and
- Private and confidential email enquiry service which means young people, friends and family can anonymously ask questions about drugs and alcohol and other related issues and we try to keep the information relevant to their concerns.

Beyond providing immediate support, young people will be offered additional services such as a call back by specialist adolescent and drug and alcohol counselors.

Where appropriate, FDS can transition young people in need into face to face counselling.

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Online counseling support for kids

Joondalup Youth Support Services' (JYSS) Drug Education Support Service is expanding its provision of drug support and education to disadvantaged, homeless and at-risk young people in Western Australia. Currently this service is only available to young people accessing JYSS' crisis accommodation service, however with support from FebFast young people across their entire agency will now have access to this invaluable program.

JYSS provides services to more than 750 young people each year, with 10-20 per cent of clients reporting serious drug and alcohol issues contributing to their homelessness or unemployment and over 50 per cent reporting some form of drug and or alcohol use.

JYSS CEO Louise Giolitto said clients will have greater access to education, counselling and support surrounding drug and alcohol related issues.

“Overall we want to decrease drug and alcohol usage, promote effective harm-minimisation strategies and engage with young people,” she said.

FebFast funds will contribute to the expansion of the Drug Education Support Service to enable disadvantaged young people from JYSS' education, employment and transitional accommodation programs, as well as increasing the capacity for crisis accommodation clients to access drug and alcohol education and support.

Typically those that access the Drug Education Support Service are young people aged 15-24 who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness, including indigenous young people and young mothers with children.

These at-risk young people (a large proportion of which engage in high risk behaviours related to alcohol and other drug use) will have access to the range of activities focusing on education, positive engagement and harm minimisation as a means of reducing their risky behaviours.

Together with a Youth Drug and Alcohol Worker, clients engage in a range of activities including group and one-on-one education sessions, positive recreation activities, art therapy and group camps.

“While some young people will ultimately not immediately decrease their substance intake for a variety of reasons, we find that exposure to education and harm-minimisation strategies does reduce the high risk taking behaviour and can lead to a long-term decrease in drug and alcohol consumption,” Louise said.

Beneficiary case study



Online alcohol health promotion

The University Department of Rural Health, University of Tasmania's 4Real project is building an innovative online alcohol health promotion tool for those who work with 12 to 18 year olds.

Dr Clarissa Hughes said the project aims to do much more than highlight the risks of alcohol consumption.

“The research evidence tells us that simply telling young people about the risks of alcohol doesn't stop them from drinking. So there's a real need to be more creative and innovative in how we approach alcohol education for high school students.”

“4Real is based on the social norms model, which looks at the way young people are influenced by their perceptions of what their peers think and do,” said Dr Hughes. This health promotion concept involves using local data to examine the perception and the reality of underage drinking and other health and social issues.

“Media coverage often implies that all teenagers are binge drinkers. That's simply untrue. People are surprised to learn that many teens don't drink at all, and of those who do drink, many of them do so responsibly, without placing themselves or others at risk. It's important to have a balanced and accurate view of this issue – and 4Real will help to achieve that,” said Dr Hughes.

Young people in the target group will be involved in fun and creative activities (such as designing posters or writing plays) associated with disseminating the positive key messages from surveys at each participating school/organisation.

“Rather than focussing on individuals, 4Real aims to alter the social environment to make it more supportive of safe consumption and non-consumption of alcohol,” said Dr Hughes

The 4Real site is designed to be a one-stop shop for teachers, social workers, health professionals, parents and others who are looking for alternatives to 'negative', risk-focused health promotion. The site includes information and articles on social norms, an online survey portal, and a discussion forum so people can share ideas and experiences.

“Ultimately, the aim is to reduce alcohol-related harm among young people, using evidence-based health promotion. Our early work indicates there's a need for such a service, so it's fantastic that FebFast funding has enabled us to make 4Real available to young people around Australia,” Dr Hughes concluded.

Anticipated launch of site – late Dec 09
www.4real.com.au (and www.socialnorms.com.au)

FebFast News

Vocational training program for ADAWS clients



Mater Hospital's Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Service (ADAWS) in Queensland received funding to boost its after-detox program for young people.

ADAWS contributes to the health and wellbeing of young people aged 13-21 years who abuse or are dependent on alcohol and/or other drugs.

Professor Brett McDermott, Director of Mater Kids in Mind said the FebFast contribution would help fund a pilot vocational training project designed to maximise the possibility of successful outcomes for young people.

"Being engaged in meaningful employment is recognised as a protective factor for mental illness. From our own experience, this assists with young people's recovery and ongoing health," he said.

In the first stage of the pilot 12 eligible young people will undergo four-week pre-training aimed at preparing them for complex problems at work.

The second stage will include specific training in a 12-week Certificate II course in hospitality and food preparation course, focusing on both front and back of house service. Training will be provided by an accredited Blueprint Careers trainer and advisor.

In the final stage, a local recruiter, Extraordinary Events and People, will assist in appropriately placing the young people in local businesses so they can use their recently acquired knowledge in real work environments.

"Issues arising during placement will be addressed in an effort to allow the participants to develop not only employable skills but confidence transferable to all areas in their lives," said Professor McDermott.

According to Professor McDermott, there is limited literature that focuses directly on impacts on youth participation in these kind of programs.

"This is an ideal project to evaluate for research purposes," he said.

Tools such as satisfaction surveys and attendance records will be used to collect quantitative data and produce a paper displaying outcomes within the setting.