

BRIDGES

Building bridges over drug

The drugs issue in the Blacktown Local Government Area does not appear to be improving, although many attempts have been made by the police, and various organisations.

BRIDGES is a new initiative with a fresh approach to tackling these ongoing problems. It is a community and agency project whose goal is to strengthen the community's ability to address issues relating to drugs.

The project is being coordinated by Blacktown Alcohol and other Drugs Family Services (BADFS), in collaboration with Western Sydney Area of Health.

Ellie Ellis of the Western Sydney Area Health Drug and Alcohol Service said a team effort was required to combat the problem.

"Lots of people are working on solving drug issues, but working together will strengthen the community and give us more power in solving the problem."

The basis behind this project is that in order to attempt to solve the problem relationships needed to be strengthened between young people, parents and the community. This is to help address the drug problem and reduce the community conflict that can occur as a result.

The first step in



Members from various agencies participating in a group task where they discuss how they or their agencies can be involved in BRIDGES.

building this project was taken last Wednesday. All the agencies, youth and community representatives came together to plan a number of community gatherings and discuss the next steps to be taken.

The Blacktown community showed great support for the project, with an attendance of approximately 80 representatives from various communities and agencies.

Tirrania Suhood, representative of the Blacktown Alcohol and other Drug Family Services said, "There was overwhelming support and interest from all sectors of the community, discussing their different views and approaches."

BRIDGES will conduct a series of gatherings to bring everyone together, with the aim of

strengthening the ability of the community to address drug issues. At these meetings the various groups will plan their own ways of dealing with drug issues.

Anyone can become involved in helping the BRIDGES project. This can be simply by attending the meetings, sharing

information, promotion, or providing funding or a venue.

By getting involved people get the satisfaction of helping their community, and a certificate of appreciation for participation.

For more information call Tirrania on 9622 7511.