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Drug and alcohol worker Tirrania Suhood ... searching for funding to keep Bridges afloat  
Photo: ANN MORAN

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# Groundbreaking drugs plan fading

by JAMESTREMAIN

FUNDING FOR an innovative drugs program developed and trialled in Blacktown will cease on Sunday, the last day of national Drug Action Week.

The program, called Bridges, has helped local youngsters, parents, teachers and social workers share ideas about drugs and alcohol in a non-confrontational way using drama, art and creative writing.

Gatherings at Mt Druitt, Riverstone, Quakers Hill and

Blacktown last year where people presented their ideas about the problems and solutions were highlights of the project, according to coordinator Tirrania Suhood.

The program was featured during a workshop at the University of Technology recently.

Bridges’ ability to take the heat out of one of society’s hottest debates impressed workers from across NSW and Queensland who plan to try similar programs in their own communities.

“People liked Bridges’

approach to working on drug issues because it is inclusive and allows people to share their ideas on what the reasons are behind drug use,” Ms Suhood said.

“People are then motivated to get involved and work towards practical solutions.”

Funding for the project ends June 30. It is unclear whether new grants will come through. “It is critical that innovative programs like this are funded because it gives people a new way to approach an old problem,” she said.