

Little guys need a louder voice

A CONFERENCE at Nirimba TAFE this month ended with calls for a peak body to fight for small non-government bodies (SNGOs).

According to one of the conference organisers, Tirrania Suhood, many SNGOs were struggling to survive.

“Many are closing down, amalgamating or being taken over,” she said.

“The survival and development of small independent non-government organisations is essential for building stronger communities.”

Speakers at the conference included NSW Social Services Council CEO Alan Kirkland, Gary Moore from the NSW Premier’s Department and Faye Willams from the NSW Local Community Services Association.

It was agreed at the meeting more research was needed to determine the sector’s value to the community.

The findings could then be used to obtain government recognition and support.

Ms Suhood, who has managed Blacktown Alcohol and Other Drugs Family Service for several years, said smaller groups were more flexible and responsive to client needs because they were less bureaucratic.

“Many small NGOs arise because the community identifies a need,” she said.

“The group is really responding to local community need. Collectively we represent grassroots democracy.

“To lose small NGOs, we would be losing local power.”

The conference was organised by TAFE research students, Nirimba TAFE, Blacktown Alcohol and Other Drugs Family Service and Voice for SONG.