

# Small is beautiful for charities too



**Tirrania Suhood at the Blacktown Alcohol and Other Drugs Family Service**

by **JAMES TREMAIN**

THE dictum "small is beautiful" is applied normally only to government and business.

But social worker Tirrania Suhood says small non-profit, non-government organisations (SNGOs) also need protection and nurturing.

"SNGOs are generally close to the communities they service, they are flexible and they provide an independent voice for their clients," she said in a recent conference paper.

"Yet many walk a fine line between survival and extinction."

Increasing professionalism, economies of scale and their ability to attract government grants mean big charities can dominate the so-called "third sector".

Their success is undermining the viability of some small organisations in the same way supermarkets and shopping malls have squeezed corner shops.

"There is nothing wrong with big," she said.

"We often collaborate with large non-

government organisations, but the small (ones) are being squeezed." Having managed Blacktown Alcohol and Other Drugs Family Service for several years, Ms Suhood knows how difficult it is for pocket-sized outfits to attract funding and stay afloat.

She is now helping drive Voice for SONG (Small Organisations Non-Government), a coalition whose mission is to fight for the survival of small non-government organisations.

"The existence of (small groups) counterbalances the power of the large non-government organisations," she said.

"The fewer voices and decision makers there are, the more uneven the distribution of power.

"Structures and incentives have been put in place by governments to encourage the development of small business, but not of small non-profit, non-government organisations."

For details call Ms Suhood on 9622 7511.