

# Together we face a new millennium

by **ROBERT SULLIVAN**

THE world in the 21st century would be a place where human contact was more important than information, where cities had been transformed into a web of "urban villages" and where "eating out" replaced the loneliness of the television dinner.

This was the future vision discussed at a Blacktown Alcohol and Other Drugs Family Services (BADFS) forum last week.

The forum revolved around the theory of social capital and how the endemic loneliness of modern life could be transformed.

The consensus was that people and organisations had to come together to lower their guards and see beyond the narrow confines of their ideologies and experiences.

BADFS vice-president Tony Hayes said people tended to be fairly individualistic in dealing with their problems, only calling for help when the situation was overwhelming.

"As a general rule we tend to only treat one end of the spectrum with these kinds of problems, when people come to the end of their tether," Mr Hayes said.

"In the end this can be fairly isolating.

"Social capital is a way of having relationships with others which are essentially quite trusting."

BADFS co-ordinator Tirrania Suhood said organisations could also suffer from loneliness if they became too set in their ways.

"In the past, we did feel alone, unsupported," Ms Suhood said.

"I know these same issues are the ones which other organisations are struggling with, even big organisations but there are ways of dealing with this together," she added.