

# *Circular Head Rural Health Services Inc.*



## *Annual Report 2004*



## **Chairperson's Report**

It is with much pleasure that I recommend to you this report on the past year's activities at Rural Health. In this report you will read of the successes and challenges during the year, the relocation to new premises and the establishment of a new round of programs.

It is pleasing to note comments from community members relating to the growing acceptance of Rural Health's programs and services. I understand that the relocation has already increased accessibility and stimulated new interest in our services.

It was pleasing to see a large number of persons representing a range of services and community members at the launch of the Emmett Street site. Positive feedback was received from Lisa Wardlaw-Kelly and Damian Eastall from the Department of Health and Ageing, who were impressed by the performance of our service, the set up of the new building and by the obvious cooperation with other service providers.

There are many people to thank for this successful year. All members of staff have contributed to programs being well attended and services operating at full capacity. Thanks go as always to Di Smith, the Manager for her vision and energy with which she keeps the centre operating smoothly.

Board members are often the invisible but at all times committed and skilful players in the important role of decision making and supporting the Manager. I extend my sincere thanks to each of them. During the year we farewelled Rachel Gardiner and Rodney Greene both foundation members of the Board and welcomed Dr. Geoffrey Stanton and Sgt. Lee-Anne Walters.

Finally thanks must go to the people of Circular Head who have supported the service by fully utilising all the services on offer at the centre. I look forward to another interesting and progressive year at Rural Health.

***Ross W. Hine***

## **Manager's Report**

It is almost unbelievable that one more year has passed and it is time again to deliver another Annual Report. It has been a most interesting year that has seen the finalisation of the first three year funding round, the development of a new service delivery plan and the relocation to Emmett Street.

It is timely to recognise that many of the goals of the service have consolidated in this past year for instance with all positions being filled with experienced and enthusiastic personnel. There have been many lessons along the way. During the year we implemented many new programs and this had some negative consequences such as overfilling the office space, placing too much demand on resources including my time that was subsequently needed for supervision and oversight of programs.

The negotiations with the Commonwealth for the new service delivery plan were at times frustrating. Service delivery costs for all aspects of the service increased in the past three years and it was a challenge to meet these rising costs and still deliver the most effective programs. The challenge for myself and the Board was to prioritise the most successful programs while allocating funds to HIPPY and to Health Promotion, an area identified as a priority in our strategic plan. Health Promotion in the new plan encompasses Arthritis and Cancer Support, Diabetes Education and Nutrition.

Surplus funds last year allowed us to employ Leo Golding and David Stone as Men's Health and Health Promotion officers. These were rewarding positions and while they were short term we have been left with a wealth of information and a useful website. The Gatekeeper program ran from November through to June. Robyn Laycock distributed more than a hundred manuals on the early detection of dementia and her workshops were well received by 21 community groups.

We have provided two 'Living Skills' programs for persons with a mental illness or disability. These programs provide an opportunity in a safe environment for people to work toward their individual goals and the feedback from participants has been positive. It is likely that ongoing funding from Family Based Care will enable a continuation of this worthwhile program.

Acting it Out has continued throughout the year with mixed results. A successful play written by the students was enjoyed by parents and friends at the end of the school year. This year started slowly for Acting it Out with fewer than expected students. Jeremy Fee resigned as manager in April and his role has been taken jointly by Alison Dick and Dean Smith who currently have 14 young people who attend over two days. The format of the program has changed slightly to encourage more participation and this has worked well.

We have again been fortunate to have secured experienced and conscientious workers and we welcomed eight new staff this past year – David Stone (Health Promotion), Leo Golding (Men's Health), Alison Dick (Mental Health Support), Dean Smith (Youth Health), Dr. Miranda Hudson (Family Planning Clinic), Linda Wooldrage (Women's Health), Lynette Dunlop and Tamara Smith (HIPPY tutors).

The move to Emmett Street went smoothly even with some difficulty finding tradespeople and with issues around cabling and electrical work in the new building. Staff and clients have commented favourably on the different environment which provides more privacy and more space.

This past year has seen the finalisation of some programs such as cancer support and sexual assault prevention. Other programs such as arthritis, diabetes education, nutrition, men's health and women's health will be revamped under Health Promotion.

The Men's Outreach Program was a highlight for the year as a team including Ron Blume and Tony Bowring spoke with 9 focus groups and received valuable information on the needs and concerns of men in Circular Head. The Tasmanian Community Fund was also impressed by the information and has allocated funds for us to provide a mentoring program for men over the next two years.

Another highlight was being able to conduct in Circular Head high quality counsellor training delivered by the Education Centre Against Violence from Sydney. The three day workshop entitled 'Who Can a Man Tell?' focused on counselling men who had been sexually abused. The training was gratefully received by 21 mental health workers from this area and from elsewhere on the north west. I received excellent feedback from several psychologists who rated it the best workshop they had ever attended. I will be attempting to find funds for 2 further sessions.

I look back over the year with enormous pride as I have been a part of a wonderful team effort to further consolidate Rural Health in the community. I look forward to delivering the new service plan and in particular to the enhancement of health promotion activities.

I extend my sincere thanks to each member of the Board as it is wonderful to know that my questions will always be answered and requests for assistance will be responded to promptly and with genuine interest. I feel the Rural Health centre is strengthened by our committed Board of Management who not only provide governance, monitor performance and represent the community but who also add value to the organisation because of the respect with which they are held in the community.

***Dianne E. Smith***



## **Management and Administration**

### **Board of Management**

Chair	W. Ross Hine	Mayor of Circular Head
Secretary	Ruth Hanson	Community Member
Member	Rachel Gardiner	Resigned March 04
Member	Marcia Smedley	Smithton District Hospital
Member	Dr. Donald Hogan	Smithton Medical Centre
Member	Dr. Geoffrey Stanton	Smithton Chiropractic Centre
Member	Joan Coleman	Women's Health Unit DHHS
Member	Sgt. Lee-Anne Walters	Tasmania Police

The Board met on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 10.00am at the Smith Street site until June 04 and afterwards at 68 Emmett Street, Smithton.

### **Management and Administration**

Di Smith is the inaugural manager who started part-time in June 2001. The position became full-time in October 2002. The Manager's position has changed considerably since the project began in June 2001. The Manager's role now includes responsibility for human resources, program supervision and oversight, submission writing, contracts with service providers, community forums, promotion, financial and project management, new program development and physical management of two sites.

These staff members were directly employed by RHS during the past year.

Di Smith	full-time	Manager
Catherine Riley	full-time	Administration Assistant
Ron Blume	part-time	Mental Health Support
Susana Bulatovic	part-time	HIPPY coordinator
Jeremy Fee	part-time	Acting it Out
Jenny Duggan	part-time	Youth Health
Dean Smith	part-time	Youth Health & Acting it Out
Tamara Smith	part-time	HIPPY
Yvonne Stone	casual	Administration Support
Alison Dick	casual	Mental Health & Acting it Out
Dr. Miranda Hudson	casual	Family Planning Clinic doctor

Services contracted to deliver programs have been:-

Women's Health Unit, DHHS  
Family Planning Tas., Sr. Jocelyn Morice  
Swanhaven Counselling Services, Mairin Campbell  
Tony Bowring Counselling  
Wyndarra Centre Inc. Counselling and Psycho Social support  
Diabetes Education Centre, DHHS  
Arthritis Tasmania  
Christina Chamley Psychologist  
Kristen Webb-Foss Psychologist

The Manager is the Chair of the Service Providers' Access Network and a member of the Circular Head Youth Network, Chair of the Tough on Drugs committee and a member of the Circular Head Community Disability Support Group.

Di has been assisted by a full-time administrative assistant, Catherine Riley. Catherine is currently studying for a Certificate in Business Administration Level IV through the local TAFE. Catherine performs all the reception duties including greeting clients, answering the telephone, making appointments and all necessary administrative tasks such as correspondence, word processing and filing. Catherine also performs a range of duties for service providers such as photocopying, word processing, altering appointments and organising venues and catering. Catherine takes room bookings and ensures that clients and service providers have all they need to make consultations safe, private and comfortable.

Over the past year the receptionist's position has broadened and an integral element of the position is the referral system. Catherine's responsibility as the first contact for clients cannot be over stated, it is a very important role and one that Catherine undertakes with professionalism and tact. Clients have never been placed with an inappropriate counsellor or worker providing evidence of Catherine's skill with referrals.

Rural Health was successful with funding submissions during the year for Gatekeeper (HACC) a program to train people to detect the onset of dementia and for the Men's Outreach Program (Tasmanian Community Fund) to train mentors for men. Rural Health also sponsored a successful application to the DHHS (Community Support Levy) for training in disability caring. Small grants were received from the Community Support Levy for new furniture for a counselling room and the Department of Health and Ageing funded a three day workshop for counsellors.

Although a move to Emmett Street did not occur until July there was at least three months of planning for the relocation. During this time significant work was undertaken and this involved painting, cleaning, rewiring and cabling, sign writing and erection of a new manager's office.



## **Programs and Services**

### **Women's Health**

Jenny Duggan left the position last September to return to Western Australia. Her position was filled by Linda Wooldrage in October.

Linda's undertakes some one on one counselling however much of her work involves community education to groups within the community. An example of this was a session with the Smithton Hospital Auxiliary presented to 17 women in relation to pap smears, breast examinations, bones, PFE, exercise and nutrition. Other very successful community education forums have been on continence and endometriosis.

Some women elect to attend the centre to access books or pamphlets on a range of topics such as menopause, osteoporosis, endometriosis or hysterectomy. Women's Health has an extensive library and books can be lent for 2 weeks. Linda is available to provide extra information in a private setting if this is requested.

Linda has been undertaking training for her position and these sessions have included sexual and reproductive health, family planning and drug use.

### **Family Planning**

The Family Planning Clinics were held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of each month during 2003. The clinics were conducted by Dr. Alison Tasker until the end of the 2003 year. Thanks to negotiations by Joan Coleman we secured the services of Dr. Miranda Hudson who began work in January 2004. The clinics were altered to 5.5 hours per clinic and this instantly increased the number of women attending, predominantly because we could offer afternoon appointments.

The services provided include cervical and breast screening, pregnancy testing, contraceptive advice, sexual counselling, gynaecological tests, specialist referrals and menopausal counselling. Referrals are made to specialist and other GP services as necessary.

Dr. Hudson has provided an impressive summary of her work which included zero unsatisfactory pap smears, 9 new registrations for the Cervical Register, 6% of clients having abnormalities picked up (the state average is 0.57%) and Miranda has seen 8.16% of clients under the age of 20 when the state average is 4.80%.

The Youth Health and Women's Health workers refer clients to Dr. Hudson however the majority of those utilising the clinic have been encouraged by positive feedback from other clients.

## **Youth Health**

The Youth Health position was full-time during this past year with Dean Smith taking on the role in October 2003. The role of the Youth Health worker involves networking, making contact with service providers, the community and developing a client base; collecting resources and extending knowledge through further study.

On average one day per week is spent at the secondary school working one on one with students. Dean liaises constantly with the social worker and vice-principal. Before and after school each day Dean is available at the health centre to see students and other young people. Dean predominantly sees young people between 12 and 24 but has the occasional younger client.

The main presenting issues are sexual health, safe sexual practices and drug awareness. A large percentage present with emotional factors due to dysfunctional family life, difficulties with relationships, separation from family or friends and bullying. Many of the young people have deep, underlying issues of grief and loss, predominantly loss of a parent.

Dean has undertaken various training sessions including sexual and reproductive health, party safe, suicide prevention, cannabis awareness and client addictions.

Community activities have included 'clean up graffiti', youth week events, Acting it Out end of year performance and as part of the mentoring/role model program at the local high school.

The Youth Health worker liaises constantly with relevant service providers such as the Youth, Drug and Alcohol service, Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation and Smithton Police.

## **Circular Head Youth Network**

Rural Health meets regularly with other youth service providers in Circular Head. These groups are the Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation, the Wyndarra Community Centre, the secondary school and several of its support staff including social worker, guidance officer, special support teacher and speech pathologist and Tasmania Police.

During the year all members except the Education Department signed a Memorandum of Understanding to monitor more closely the services being given to young people. The Education Department is expected to sign the M.O.U shortly. The protocols agreed in this document will assist with the management of service provision ensuring no gaps or over servicing and to hopefully guarantee the most appropriate and effective provision of service to each young person.



## **Acting it Out**

The Tasmanian Community Fund has sponsored our successful theatre since the beginning of 2003. Acting it Out will be completed in December 2004. The program aims to create a beneficial, safe environment for its young participants by developing their confidence and abilities through acting and other facets of drama such as voice and speech, movement, scriptwriting and technical theatre.

Jeremy Fee, a degree graduate in Performing Arts and Drama, managed the theatre from April 2003 until April this year. Jeremy's great passion for theatre created a positive effect on his students and enabled their talents and self esteem levels to grow steadily within the program. A wonderful play entitled, X-treme Ancient Athletes, written and acted by the group entertained family and friends at the end of 2003 and was a highlight of the program.

On Jeremy's departure, our Mental Health worker Alison and Dick and Youth Worker, Dean Smith took on the management role sharing 14 young people over 2 days. The program's main focus on drama was altered slightly to include more generic living skills and issues however the emphasis is still on creativity and esteem building. A major artistic event is planned for the final term of this year.

## **Tough on Drugs Project**

Members of the Circular Head Service Providers' Access Network successfully applied for funding through the 'Tough on Drugs' National Illicit Drug Strategy. Di Smith chairs the sub-committee that oversees the program. The committee employs a part-time worker whose role is principally to educate the community on illicit drug use. The coordinator has been promoting the 'Good Sports' program where sporting clubs are given extra training and made more aware of their role in preventing and providing disincentive to the use of drugs and misuse of alcohol amongst their members.

The work of the Tough on Drugs community educator complements the aims of Rural Health's Health Promotion and Youth Health team.

## **Cancer Support**

Jocelyn Morice conducted two very successful cancer awareness forums during the year. The two forums were on skin and bowel cancer. Invitations for the skin cancer awareness forum were sent to outdoor workers from a range of workplaces in Circular Head and this proved to be very successful. Dr. Jenny Ostenfeld gave a presentation along with Judy Brown of the Cancer Council and Dr. Ostenfeld was available for individual spot testing after the forum.

The Bowel Cancer Awareness Group was organised with two service clubs and this was a clever way of attaining good attendance. The evening forum was delivered by Dr. Donald Hogan and Judy Brown of the Cancer Council. Jocelyn Morice and David Stone organised the session. The serious topic was

lightened with a humorous talk from Dr. Hogan and there was excellent supporting information and pamphlets.

The Cancer Support Group combined with the Arthritis group and they have been meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month from 10.30am -12.30pm. The group has been renamed the Healthy Living group. Different guest speakers have been utilised to provide useful and interesting information on self care, alternative therapies and new research. The group also provides a safe environment for the sharing of emotions and experiences.

Jocelyn completed a 'Specialist Breast Nurse' course at Edith Cowan University in Perth and is now qualified to deliver consultations and information sessions for clients who have experienced breast cancer. Dr. Hudson has agreed for Jocelyn to see clients during clinic hours.

### **Tai Chi**

Patricia Reid, the facilitator of the Tai Chi classes has an instructor's certificate from Dr Paul Lam. The 12 movements of Tai Chi are designed to exercise every part of the body without placing any strain on the body therefore it is suitable for all ages. It assists the healing process and promotes the benefits of movement in the body.

The classes were advertised in the local and regional newspapers. The response to the classes was overwhelming. Twenty five persons responded to the advertisements and forty persons attended the first session. It was decided that two sessions would be offered to accommodate the demand. Thirty one participants continued with the six week program. Handouts of the exercises were made available to class participants.

The ages of the participants ranged from 25 to 80. The number of participants with health problems was significant. The health problems included arthritis, injuries sustained from accidents, sciatica, and broken bones from falls. One particular lady in the 55-65 age range, living with chronic osteoarthritis and needing a walking stick, attended every session. She claimed that the Tai Chi increased her mobility, helped her to relax and overall improved her wellbeing. Participants were given handouts and were able to purchase a CD to support them in continuing the exercises at home.

### **Counselling and Mental Health Support**

Part of this service has been provided by Mairin Campbell who has worked an average of 3 days per fortnight. Mairin's work is particularly with children and she has been working very successfully with children achieving positive outcomes for individuals and their families. Referrals have come from the medical centre, schools and individuals. The average number of appointments for clients is 3.5 visits in the specified period and the range is from 1 to 8 sessions.



Four of the children receiving ongoing therapy have a background of sexual abuse. Consultation sessions vary from one to one and a half hours for most of the younger children to two hours for adults.

The services of Tony Bowring have also been utilised 1 ½ days per week to provide counselling. Tony summarises his work as having a focus on issues such as relationships, grief, trauma, addictions and anger. The consultations have been for a minimum of one hour, longer when necessary. Most are either self or by spouse referral, an increasing number of GP referrals, word of mouth and from other agencies.

Wyndarra has long recognised the need for supportive social work to complement the existing counselling and crisis response work in Circular Head. Wyndarra reported an increase in the number of presentations of depression, anxiety, addictions and substance abuse together with physical or mental health disorders during the past year.

Wyndarra has utilised the Rural Health funding to provide a continuity of support, care, social interaction and an opportunity to re-establish client confidence, dignity and potential. They have been supporting individuals to access services and implementing preventative strategies to secure future self-management.

Ron Blume and Alison Dick have been employed directly by RHS for one day per week each. Ron and Alison both provide counselling and mental health support services (including home visits) on a least one day per week each. The availability of counselling and mental health support has made a considerable difference to the lives of individuals who are living with the challenges associated with a mental illness. A small number of persons have been seen consistently over a long period of time and these are persons with a serious disorder that requires regular support so they are able to have the best quality of life in the community.

Psychologists, Christina Chamley and Kristen Webb have attended the Rural Health Services one day per fortnight since August 2002. Kristen returned from maternity leave this year and worked 6 half days in 2004. The psychologists have been used for psychometric assessment, predominantly adults referred by the local medical centre. The majority of clients receiving ongoing therapy have a diagnosed psychiatric condition.

### **Living Skills Program**

This program of 10 days over 10 weeks was available for persons with a diagnosed mental illness or disability. All the participants were adults. The program was conducted at the Nelson Street site and facilitated by Alison Dick. The participants worked on a personal goal setting program with some of the goals as simple as; coming to the group each week, having the opportunity to socialise, develop conversation skills, learning to cook something new and nutritious or having a reason to get out of bed.

Over the ten weeks the participants went on excursions, attended barbeques in the local area, cooked a simple meal on most days with ingredients bought on a shopping expedition and listened to guest speakers with topics including hygiene and grooming, men's health and personal care.

The participants of the program were delighted with the outcomes and the support they received as they worked toward attaining their goals. The program ran twice with the second being funded by Family Based Care.

### **Gatekeeper**

HACC funded a nine month pilot to provide community education and training on the early detection of dementia. The coordinator, Robyn Laycock gathered resources and developed a training manual. Invitations were sent to a range of businesses and community groups and 21 groups of people attended training sessions. Over the nine months Robyn distributed over 130 manuals and significantly increased the degree of awareness in relation to dementia in Circular Head.

### **Sexual Assault Prevention**

Christina Chamley and Mairin Campbell conducted 3 personal development courses entitled 'Now I Am Free' which attracted a number of women from the area. The courses were conducted over 8 days and the content focussed on confidence building, setting goals and changing life direction. The feedback from the women was very positive, all of the women related experiences of new confidence and the development of personal strategies enabling them to deal with a range of difficult situations in their lives. 4 women from one group of 6 have undertaken further study.

### **Sexual Abuse Counsellor Training**

Funding was acquired from the Department of Health and Ageing through a one-off grant to deliver a three day workshop on sexual abuse counselling. The training was delivered by the Education Centre Against Violence from Parramatta. 21 mental health workers including 6 psychologists and 8 male counsellors were extremely impressed by the quality of the workshop. It is hoped that in the near future funding will be available to deliver further workshops.

### **Disability Carer Training**

The Manager has been a member of the Circular Head Community Disability Support Group that has undertaken a survey into the needs of the community. Rural Health sponsored the group's application to the DHHS – Community Support Levy for funds to offer a training course for potential carers of persons with a disability. After some difficulty recruiting a coordinator the program began in February 2004 with 8 students. The coordinator was Karen Herman.



The course was unique in that half of the course was hands-on in the homes of families where there was a person with a disability. The in-home trainers and mentors (who were all persons with a disability) received payment for their time. The course ran for 8 weeks with students attending either a class or in home training on 4 days each week. The program is currently being evaluated.

### **Diabetes Education**

A Diabetes Nurse Educator from the North West Diabetes Service attended the Smithton District Hospital for an outreach diabetes clinic one Friday of each calendar month. The Thursday prior this day each month was added to the outreach clinic as part of the CHRHS service agreement. During the previous year a support group was conducted however the number of persons attending was also low and the support group was discontinued.

### **Men's Program**

One 10 week course was conducted during the past twelve months. The Men's Program covered topics such as anger management, communication skills, relationships, mentoring and conflict resolution.

This fourth course had 9 participants including 2 men under 30 years of age. 29 men now qualify to join the popular Men's Support Group that meets fortnightly. This support group has maintained good to excellent attendance levels. Meetings have a sharing focus around food and discussing issues that are topical and current for the men. Guest speakers relevant to men's health or interests supplement ordinary meetings.

The Men's Program has been extremely successful and is a low cost and effective way to mentor and support men in the community.

### **Parenting**

In November we held a 1-2-3 Magic one day workshop. This workshop was conducted by Relationships Australia. This provided an alternative to the longer commitment of the Parent Effectiveness Program held previously over 10 weeks. Seven persons participated in the one day workshop and the facilitator and attendees were pleased with the course content and outcomes.

A Parent Effective Training (P.E.T.) course was also held from July to September 2003, facilitated by the Wyndarra Centre. Nine participants attended the course with eight completing, seven females and one male. P.E.T. is a method of discipline and relating to children that is best for both parent and child. It is designed for fairness, mutual needs, satisfaction, no power plays and to give a balance of respect. The concept can be applied equally as well in a work environment, with friends and others in the community.

The feedback from participants was extremely positive and evidenced by comments such as *'I feel the principles of P.E.T. are very effective and hope*

*that they will improve my relationship with my children and adults;’ ‘This course has gave me skills to achieve a friendship with my girls. I don’t dictate as much. Hopefully soon I will not dictate at all;’ ‘Active listening would have to be the hardest. I tend to butt in.’*

A HIPPY program that runs for 2 years began at the end of 2003. HIPPY or Home Instruction of Parents of Preschool Youngsters is an early childhood education program designed for parents of four and five year old preschool children who live in Circular Head who wish to give their children a head start into schooling. HIPPY is a successful international program with 6 programs currently running in Australia.

The program coordinator is Suzana Bulatovic who also trains and supervises 2 home tutors. Promotion of the program began in the latter part of 2003 and readily accepted by the community. 24 families registered 25 preschoolers for the beginning of the school year. The families participating include 11 part time working mothers, 1 full time working mother and 12 mothers who do not work. 3 of the mothers are single parents.

Parent group meetings are held fortnightly in the local playgroup centre. These meetings are used as a training session for the HIPPY material as well as sharing information on a variety of other topics (the topics decided by the parents). The HIPPY program in Circular Head has been very successful. It is the only program in Australia that has had no drop outs. The coordinator and home tutors are very competent and passionate with regard to the value of the program and this has a favourable impact on the participants. Even after 10 weeks there has been a noticeable increase in the skills of the children and this has been noted by the tutors, parents and their teachers.

HIPPY was originally funded through surplus funds however because of its success it is now funded from the Commonwealth’s core service delivery plan. It is hoped that further funding will be obtained to expand the program to an extra intake each year.

### **Health Promotion**

In October 2003 we employed David Stone in the position of Health Promotion Officer (HPO). This position was full-time until June 2004. As the HPO was a new position for Circular Head David’s initial focus was on the evaluation of reading material to gain insight into the actions of peers engaged in similar work (in other communities) with the aim of identifying best practice. This process included gathering research material to inform future project decisions, examining methodologies including evaluation strategies and identifying the various resources available within the local community.

The HPO networked in the area of health promotion by attending meetings with a number of service providers, predominantly in Circular Head but also in Burnie and at a Health Promotion Officer network meeting in Swansea. Two projects were examined in detail with a view to conducting these in Circular Head. These projects were the Wellington TONNE project (for

community weight loss) and the GOLD project for community physical activities.

The HPO found that obesity and non-participation in physical activity are particular problems that affect the general health of the population of Circular Head with high incidence of associated disease. Generating motivation for engagement in lifestyle changes is crucial and using a risk awareness campaign highlighting diabetes prevention has proven to be successful in other countries at encouraging weight loss and increased physical activity rates amongst pre-diabetic groups.

Over six months the HPO initiated a program for supporting people who have an increased risk of developing diabetes, promoted physical activity and successful strategies for weight management, developed individual lifestyle evaluations and held community forums to support and present information.

The HPO was available to see people individually or in small groups. A library of information remains at the centre easily accessible by the public.

### **Men's Health**

In October 2003 we employed a Men's Health Officer utilising funds from the Commonwealth's surplus funds. Leo Golding, a physiotherapist with an interest in men's health was given the permanent part-time position (.4FTE) until the end of June 2004. Leo spent some time researching the various topics around men's health, developing a health questionnaire that he took to the Stanley Show and identifying various models to deliver information to men in Circular Head.

The focus of this position was to impart information on positive men's health in a way that would encourage men to become aware and also to empower them to make changes for themselves. Leo identified five areas that could be explored in an expanded men's program - identifying language gaps, identifying supportive environments, identifying and acknowledging masculinities, identifying self responsibility and identifying services and needs.

Leo also established an effective web site for Rural Health, [www.ruralhealth.netfirms.com](http://www.ruralhealth.netfirms.com) with a focus on Men's and Youth Health. The site has many useful links to other health and information sites.

Readings in illness prevention and health promotion for men lead Leo to the same subject matters over and over. The subjects that featured prominently were diet, nutrition and exercise and the management of stress, including understanding disease management and how to manage addictions such as smoking.

Leo concluded that there are no fixed ways to do the above. Some primary health centres are making screenings the prime driver to curb health problems. Other community health centres have launched an evening out

with entertainment so that men pick up on vital messages on that occasion. Mass media channels are presenting articles and stories on health initiatives.

Quit Smoking has a dismal 35% success rate before 60 years of age with men (an example of necessity creating change). Leo firmly believed that changing the way men think of themselves would change their behaviour. This would have links to a mental health initiative however the crucial difference between the two areas is that health promotion deals with promoting new patterns of behaviour instead of altering existing ones.

The Men's Health and Health Promotion positions will be merged under the new service delivery plan.

### **Nutrition Manual**

A comprehensive nutrition manual was completed by the Community Nutrition Unit, principally Julie Williams. We were very grateful for the Unit as it had taken six months to find an agency or individual to undertake the project. We are happy with the resulting manual which is available in hard copy or on CD. The Nutrition Unit is happy to provide training in the community to groups of service providers or the public to ensure the best utilisation of the manual.

### **Window Displays**

Window displays at the Smith and Emmett Street sites were utilised to their best advantage. We have continued with art exhibitions whenever possible to encourage more community members to visit the centre. Some of the displays during the past year have been:-

HIPPY	Recycling
Gatekeeper	Drug Action Week
RHS Open Day	Healthy Bones Week
Domestic Violence Art	Father's Day Why my Dad is healthy
World No Tobacco Day	Men's Health
Harmony Day	Gymnastics
Maintenance Service	Pap Smear Action
Seniors Week	Weedbusters Week
Contemporary Christian Art	

### **Open Day**

An Open Day was held at Smith in February to coincide with the four hour frenzy conducted by the retailers in the CBD. Displays at the centre on Open Day included:- Neck and Hand Massage, Women's Health – Breast Screen Mammogram Display, Philippine food, Youth, Drug and Alcohol, Mental Health and Cancer Awareness.

Free mini health checks (blood pressure, body mass index, height/weight ratios, blood sugar levels) were provided for 230 people and more



comprehensive checks for another 30 people were provided by David Stone, the Health Promotion officer.

### **Men's Outreach Program**

All suicides in Circular Head since 1997 have been males, the majority of them in older age groups. It was decided to interview small groups of men throughout the region in an attempt to ascertain the reasons why men traditionally do not seek emotional support. Ron Blume, our Mental Health Support worker and Tony Bowring, a counsellor and men's group facilitator conducted the sessions assisted by project worker Lee Williams. The focus groups were at an aged care facility, Apex Club, Lions Club, SES, Rural Fire Brigade, Classic Foods and Circular Head Men's Group and included men from 18 to 80 years of age.

The material gleaned from the sessions was collated and a community reference group used to assist with the compilation of the issues and messages. The report has been well received and an application for funds to enlarge the program was successful. The Tasmanian Community Fund has provided funds for 2 years. This funding will employ Dean Smith and Tony Bowring to develop a mentoring program to train men in workplaces to mentor and support other men.

