

# Greater Dandenong City Council

## Good Practice in Health Project - Community Strengthening for Health

### **Project justification - why do the project?**

This project focused on supporting community groups undertaking Community Strengthening Projects funded through council's community grants program. It was thought that a project of this nature would be able to demonstrate links to the municipal public health plan and make clear recommendations to council on how it could improve its support for community groups in development of the community grants program.

### **Methodology - how we did it**

The project involved:

- focus group discussions (community representatives and council staff)
- workshops for community groups offering tips for submission writing and project management
- presentations and case studies on several of the projects, which were also disseminated
- development of a project report, which included case studies and recommendations for council to further develop the community grant program and enhance support of community groups.

### **Partners – who was involved?**

The range of people involved in this initiative included representatives from:

- neighbourhood and community centres
- cultural groups
- council departments such as Health Services and Youth Services
- Sinclair Knight Merz Consultancy
- administration support staff

### **Outcomes - what changes occurred as a result of the project?**

Some of the key outcomes of this project were:

- improved community self-confidence, esteem and capacity to participate in community life
- increased community access to services and awareness of important social issues
- improved understanding of cultural differences by community and organisations
- improved partnerships with colleagues and workers from a range of organisations
- developed structures and frameworks (research, community engagement)
- Completed a report with recommendations for council and the community grants program
- showcasing local grant funded projects
- redevelopment of council's community grants program
- initiated ongoing support for groups by council in the form of cluster meetings at key times during the funding period.

### **Where to now?**

Council has endorsed the key recommendations made in the project report. The learnings from the project have begun to be incorporated into planning the next

round of funding for the Community Strengthening Grants Program, which will open in October 2004.

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