



PARENTSPREPARED

PARENTS PREPARED EVALUATION REPORT 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Parents Prepared Program is part of Manly Drug Education and Counselling Centre's (MDECC) community drug action strategy to address drug and alcohol use. The program utilises peer education as a strategy to educate parents about the harms of both illicit and licit drug use whilst also acting as an intervention addressing familial issues. The primary aim of Parents Prepared is to provide parents with up to date knowledge about drugs and drug use and for them to spread this information throughout their community.

Since its development in 1998 up until June 2005, this program has been delivered with funding sourced from the local community. In September 2005 MDECC received a two year funding grant from the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation (AER) Foundation to continue and further develop the program. Due to cost-efficiency in project management an extension of the funding period was requested and granted until December 2008. This allowed ongoing implementation of the Parents Prepared Program to local parents in addition to the scope of the full project term.

The Parents Prepared Program has been evaluated by MDECC since its development in 1995 with additional resources; the AER Foundation has engaged the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) at the University of New South Wales to conduct an independent evaluation of the project over the two year period. The NDARC independent evaluation results are included in this report.

The funding grant provided by the AER Foundation has enabled the Parents Prepared Program to be conducted on a more regular and planned basis. In addition, a second stage has been implemented to enhance and build onto an already well evaluated peer education program for parents.

Stage One: Parents Prepared Program Training Component

Stage Two: Parents Prepared Network & Web-Link

Stage Two has involved the establishment of a Parents Prepared Network and Web-

Link. The Network has developed from a core group of parents and continues to enhance sustainability of the peer education training component. It does this by ensuring that the Parents Prepared peer educators are kept motivated and updated with accurate information. In addition, Stage Two has also seen the creation of a regular e-newsletter whereby peer educators receive information updates and links and can interact online with the MDECC Intervention Program Team in relation to alcohol and drug education and community issues. Follow up sessions also provide knowledge and skills updates as well as opportunities for peer educators to stay in touch and support each other.

The Steering Committee with members representing previous Parents Prepared participants, local Parents and Citizens associations, NDARC and MDECC staff have continued to contribute valuable expertise, feedback and support to the program.

MDECC would like to thank the AER Foundation for providing funding to enable such a valuable community program to continue and further develop, as well as NDARC for their contribution to research evidence in the field of peer education.

The programs included in this evaluation report are as follows:

- **AERF 1:** November 19th and 26th 2005 held over two Saturdays in Manly with 14 participants attending
- **AERF 2:** May 20th and 27th 2006 held over two Saturdays in Manly with 12 participants attending
- **AERF 3:** August 1st, 2nd, 8th and 9th 2006 held over four evenings in Manly with 15 participants attending
- **AERF 4:** November 4th and 11th 2006 held over two Saturdays in Mona Vale with 14 participants attending
- **AERF 5:** March 24th and 31st 2007 held over two Saturdays at MDECC in Manly with nine participants attending
- **AERF 6:** August 18th and 25th 2007 held over two Saturdays in Dee Why with nine participants attending
- **AERF 7:** October 20th and 27th 2007 held over two Saturdays at MDECC in Manly with six participants attending
- **AERF 8: June** 28th 2008 held on one Saturday in Hornsby with nine participants attending
- **AERF 9:** September 13th and 27th 2008 held over two Saturdays in Manly with six participants attending

Ninety-four participants have been recruited and trained during the period from November 2006 to September 2008, eighty-six of them completing both sessions of the program. Most of these parents live in the Northern Beaches area although some participants came from the greater northern Sydney area. There were twenty fathers amongst the group (nine of whom attended with their wives as a couple) and five grandmothers. Once trained, these parents act as information and referral links between their local drug and alcohol services and their own social and parenting networks (e.g. schools, children's sporting events and clubs, social gatherings, workplaces, gyms, churches, Parents and Citizens Associations, parent support organisations etc).

Sixty of those ninety-four parents took part in the independent evaluation conducted by NDARC. The evaluation process covered programs held between May 2006 and October 2007 with follow up interviews every three, six and twelve months. Outcomes show that parents reported an increased knowledge level which was also sustained at the 12 month follow-up for all groups.

Scores for quality of presenters were above nine out of ten which indicates near excellent levels of satisfaction from the recipients. The major concern highlighted in the evaluation is that participants do not stay in touch after the course and do not get involved in community initiatives.

As outlined later-on, MDECC has initiated activities within the program to ensure that those program objectives are being met and that the peer education component of the program is strengthened and enhanced.