

Optus Connecting Communities Grant - 2009

Activate Australia

Project title: Connections

Activate Australia is a RTO and delivers leadership development programs for young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and, as part of that leadership development process, offers nationally-recognised Certificates of education for young people completing our programs. Activate Australia's mission is to recognise, develop and activate the personal and community leadership potential of young people from disadvantaged communities.

Activate delivers leadership development programs for young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The project allows our Certificate level courses to be delivered in an on-line, distance education format.

The project will be delivered in various locations around Melbourne and Millers Point in Sydney.

The Leadership Programs use experiential learning models and multimedia format to introduce the young people to the learning process. This has proved an effective approach. Because the learning process for them proves to be a positive experience, the majority desire to go on and study for the Certificates. However, not possessing an on-line format has meant that some, from geographically distant suburbs and cities, are not able to complete these studies.

Optus staff Affiliation: Cameron Churches

Balga Detached Youth Work Project Inc. (BDYWP)

Project title: Finding My Way

BDYWP targets high-risk young people who have serious welfare and social problems, and complex personal and family issues. BDYWP focus upon supporting at-risk young people through a transitional model of service delivery that promotes the opportunities of youth to shift from issues of survival towards issues of self-inquiry, self worth and active citizenship.

Finding My Way is an alternative life skills development program focusing on engaging socially, educationally and personally disengaged young people into productive and pro-social day activities with an emphasis upon health, positive life experiences and personal development seeking to support their integration back within the community.

The Project will support young people living in the low socio-economic suburbs of Balga, Girrawheen, Mirrabooka, Koondoola and the surrounding suburbs. The Project will be co-ordinated from the BDYWP offices located in Balga. The Project involves a rolling schedule of community based activities primarily within the stated region.

The target group young people have little familiarity with internet I.T services. Components within the Project will expose these young people to this form of communication. Young people will be able to establish email and social networking profiles as a part of the Project.

Berry Street

Project title: GirLink - Young Women's Peer Support Project

Berry Street is an independent community organisation which has been supporting the Victorian community since 1877. With a background in providing care & support to Victoria's most vulnerable children, we now also work collaboratively in communities to prevent the horror of child abuse & neglect by strengthening family, school & community capacity.

GirLink is a peer support project for young women between the ages of 10-18, who are living in the Shire of Murrindindi. It is a collaborative project which aims to provide opportunities for young women to form friendships & share positive experiences in a supported environment.

The initial meetings for the Project will take place in Alexandra & the 2-day residential component will take place at Camp Jungai in the Rubicon Valley, located in the Shire of Murrindindi. This provides an opportunity for us to support local businesses post-Bushfires as well as chances for young women to engage with one another in their local environment.

The participants will be encouraged to keep in contact following the 2-day residential component of the Project by phone, SMS and email in between face to face contact. This encourages contact to continue & provides opportunities for relationships to be sustained over time.

Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre Inc.

Project title: Youth Well linked

Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre is a non profit organisation established 30 years ago to help in the relief of poverty, distress and misfortune affecting residents of the North Ward of Bankstown.

We will provide free internet access on two computers for young people to use at all time for both education, research and recreational purposes.

The Roundabout Youth Centre at 104 Carlingford Road, Sefton, NSW 2162.

The internet is the new social highway for young people interacting and researching information with other young people of similar interests and situations from differing areas.

Cystic Fibrosis Queensland (CFQ)

Project title: On-line CF Education & Support Service

CFQ was formed in 1967 by parents of children with CF to support each other. CFQ is a statewide organisation based in Brisbane and is a member of CF Australia. Support services are available to nearly 800 people with CF who access a Qld hospital whether they live in Qld, Northern NSW or Northern Territory.

CFQ seeks funding to develop and implement an on-line education and support program on the CF Australia national website incorporating on-line forums for young people with CF to help overcome their social isolation and to provide access to health information and support.

CFQ will take on the role of leading and managing this project on behalf of CFA and other state CF associations. Funding will be administered by CFQ in Brisbane.

The program will establish contact networks, discussions groups and chat rooms specific to children, 8 to 16 years, and young people, 16 to 18 years, connecting them to others of similar age, both with CF and without, to share experiences, have peer support and access to health information and support.

Desert 2 Surf Limited

Project title: Desert2Surf Photo Voice Inclusion Project

The Desert2Surf Initiative is a non-profit organisation established in 2008. Guided by a health promotion and harm prevention framework its aim is to build the capacity and resilience of indigenous Australian youth living in remote and disadvantaged communities.

Desert2Surf aims to build the capacity of indigenous youth living in remote and disadvantaged communities. The Desert2Surf PhotoVoice Inclusion Project will involve engaging Minyerri youth in an activity using Optus Phones to take photos of their homeland. The photos will then be used as a way to select youth to participate in the next Desert2Surf surfing trip in Victoria. The photos will also be exhibited in the PhotoVoice Exhibition in Melbourne.

The Project will be located in the remote community of Minyerri, Northern Territory. Minyerri is based 276 km's south-east of Katherine in the Allawa Country. The PhotoVoice Exhibition will then be held in Melbourne, VIC

This project will use information and communication technologies in several capacities. Firstly, indigenous youth will use Optus mobile phones to take photos of their homeland. Secondly, the youth will upload their photos to the internet, develop story books and share these on social networking systems and through Desert2Surf trips. Thirdly, the PhotoVoice Exhibition held in Melbourne will involve interactive multi-media.

Optus Staff Affiliation: Trang Nguyen

Edmund Rice Camps (SA) Inc

Project title: "Kids At Risk Camp"

Edmund Rice Camps (SA) Inc. was founded in 1990 & became an incorporated body on 28th June 1996. The organisation has approximately 400 members who volunteer to work with the children & young people who participate on our camps. We provide camps, day activities and other support programs to children, young people and families. ERC also provides volunteers, particularly young adults with opportunities to gain experience, and training working with children, young people & families

"Kids At Risk Camp" is for 3 nights and 4 days, for young people between the ages of 6 -11 years. The focus of the camp is to provide an environment that fosters positive self- esteem and personal development, while providing achievable challenges and goals. On camp, there are approximately 15- 20 places available for the young people and 25- 30 places for volunteers (also young people aged mostly 16-25years). Kids at Risk Camps will take place in the 2010 January school holidays.

The project will be conducted at Rostervor College Boarding House in Adelaide. This enables use of local community to draw upon for activities and various local attractions, i.e. beach trips.

Edmund Rice Camps SA Inc uses information technology predominantly to connect to young adults, agencies and service providers through a variety of methods. This includes Our website, which is regularly updated through RSS feeds, Facebook, E-Newsletters and more recently the use of Twitter. We also regularly use SMS, and emails. This enables end users to have freedom to choose which methods of communications they prefer.

Foodbank SA

Project title:

Providing emergency food relief through school breakfast programs to young, indigenous and regionally isolated South Australians

Foodbank SA is South Australia's largest emergency food relief operation, linking 535 welfare groups and nearly 400 local food companies and sponsors to source, store and distribute approximately 1.2 million

kilograms of food to 120,000 marginalised South Australians every year ~ there remains considerable unmet demand for Foodbank services across regional SA.

Filling unmet demand for food relief services in rural areas. 60% of food will be distributed to vulnerable children either directly or through school breakfast programs - benefiting an estimated 10,000 regional children annually. Programs will be jointly implemented with local welfare and business groups, enabling vital assistance to vulnerable communities.

The Whyalla branch will service the Iron Triangle, West Coast, mid-north and northern districts of the State and APY Lands.

IT is a key platform for connecting Foodbank with its stakeholders, including local welfare agencies, supermarkets, local government and food companies – 'staying connected' is key to Foodbank driving the outcomes of re-engaging youth and delivering improved nutritional programs to vulnerable and marginalised children.

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative

Project title: Kalay Wartee Indigenous Mentoring Project

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative(inc) is the largest service provider for the Indigenous community in south west Victoria. It covers Koori health education, spiritual wellbeing, maternal and child health and family support, drug and alcohol support and counselling, promotes Koori community needs and provides full home care services.

A combination of individual mentoring, group activity, traditional dance and leadership opportunities! Young Indigenous people are each matched with trained adult volunteer from the community (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) as their mentor for regular social contact and support. Regular group activities include traditional dance and leadership opportunities.

A DVD will be produced with the young participants and mentors capturing and celebrating the stories of the program and cultural dance performances.

Hear for You

Project title: Hear For you

Hear For You runs mentoring programs aimed at assisting young deaf people, aged 11-18, to integrate more effectively into the hearing world. It provides support during a vulnerable stage of life when the young people involved are greatly in need of motivation, confidence and social and leadership skills.

Through a series of workshops and with ongoing e-mentoring support, the program provides inspiration, life skills and guidance through the very difficult but vitally important adolescent years.

Hear For You is located at Inspire Foundation's office in Sydney. Its workshops are held at St Johns College, University of Sydney. Attending workshops within the university ground is of great experience and benefit for the participants, especially for those who are preparing themselves for possible university courses and considering future goals for after school

The program reconnects disengaged youth via e-mentoring and face-to-face and residential workshops. The workshop topics include identity, communication, relationships, health and well-being, teamwork, leadership, career exploration, further study and future employment prospects. These topics have been carefully selected to cover critical stages in the hearing impaired adolescents' formative years at school and beyond. We provide ongoing e-mentoring support to ensure they remain engaged.

Optus Staff Affiliation: Ana Tabacman

Hope Empowered Inc

Project title: Project 180

The mission of Hope Empowered Inc is to enable people to connect with and strengthen one another, empower people to engage the poor and disadvantaged, and to equip people for fullness of life. We do this by equipping people for the workforce, mentoring school children and assisting families in need.

Project 180 is a 20 week project that turns lives around by helping young people aged 18 - 25 to overcome their barriers to employment through a combination of life skills training, job preparation, accredited training and paid work experience in the areas of multi-media, graphic design and sound recording.

The project is delivered at our headquarters in Enoggera, a suburb in Brisbane's inner north west.

The objective is to turn around the lives of the participants by equipping them to: obtain on-going employment; undertake further study; overcome their barriers to employment (lifestyle, drug addiction, behavioural, psychological etc); enable them to build positive relationships with their partner, children, friends and the wider community; and to become contributing and valued members of their community.

Horizon Theatre Company Limited

Project title: Edge Street Theatre

Horizon Theatre Company was established in 1997 with the aim of establishing a world-class repertoire theatre in Sydney's South West Region and beyond. It has also become a pioneer in arts-based strategies for young people to equip them with alternative methods for early intervention and crime prevention.

Young people in at risk areas from diverse cultural, linguistic and religious communities will be brought together. Mentored by professional artists, they will create a new theatrical troupe with the aim of performing a new production at the end of the project.

Based in Wiley Park, the project will draw participants from Canterbury/ Bankstown LGAs and surrounding areas. Many of the young people in this area come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and there is a high incidence of criminal activity involving young people.

As well as creating a show, the young participants will need to promote their final production. This will be done through phone calls, email, social networking sites, blogs and uploaded video diaries. Participants will also be given access to the horizon theatre web page where, under supervision, they can design their own pages.

Kids Plus Foundation

Project title: Kids Plus Therapy Program

KidsPlus is a not-for-profit organisation, convened in 2003 by families of children with physical disabilities to provide high quality, regular therapy that focuses on daily functional tasks we all take for granted such as communication, choice, mobility, self care and play. These facilitate inclusion, participation, access to education and independence.

Specialist therapy for children and teenagers with Cerebral palsy and brain injury; to assist mobility, communication, eating, play, self-care and access to education; health and wellbeing; to support participation and inclusion in family and societal settings and to help each child reach their potential and live as independently as possible.

The program is an innovative response to the lack of regular high quality therapy that is essential to the health, wellbeing and functionality for these children. This significantly and directly impacts on each child's

potential for participation and inclusion in family and societal settings and long term options for living independently.

Alternative Augmentative Communication technology is used (communication books, switching devices, communication technology) to aid children to make decisions, communicate needs and be involved. Specialised disability equipment (standing frames, walkers, electric wheel chairs) are also prescribed. Information on resources is made easily accessible.

Legs on the Wall

Project title: Physical Theatre for Indigenous Young People

Legs on the Wall, established in 1984, is Australia's leading physical theatre company, making extreme performance at the intersection of site, live music and projections, aerial work, dance and acrobatics. As an artistic hub for the performing arts community, Legs partners with local community organisations and councils to deliver programs for emerging artists, at-risk youth and Indigenous young people.

Trainers from Legs on the Wall and the Brewarrina Youth Circus will conduct circus & physical theatre skills workshops at the Redfern Community Centre (RCC), 2 afternoons/wk for 12 weeks in Terms 1 & 2, 2010 to Indigenous young people in preparation for Gathering Ground, a multi-art, high flying, hip-hop, site specific performance event on The Block in Redfern in May, 2010.

With years of social unrest and entrenched socio-economic, educational and cultural issues, young people in the Redfern area are socially disengaged and at-risk, facing a future with massively inadequate skills in social, cultural, vocational and educational areas. The project will address social, cultural and vocational needs.

The project will target on-line and portable media audiences via the internet and social networking sites such as twitter, myspace, youtube, blogs and facebook. Digital video clips and stills produced by the participants will promote the on-going progress and performance event of the classes.

Liminal Lines Incorporated

Project title: Liminal Lines Peer Education

The Liminal Lines program works with young women within the Youth Justice system in residential and community settings. A dedicated group of performance artists facilitate workshops for the program participants to develop performance pieces and songs from their life experiences.

Liminal Lines will provide peer education sessions on the consequences of drug use, criminal activity and risk taking behaviour to years 9 and 10 students at secondary colleges around Melbourne. The young women from Liminal Lines will perform material and songs developed from their own personal insights and experiences, which convey a strong message about risk-taking behaviour. A blog will be available on Liminal Lines website for discussion and advice.

16 secondary colleges around Melbourne will be targeted in areas where youth risk-taking and youth crime are prevalent, eg Cranbourne, Dandenong, Frankston, St.Albans, Footscray, Heidelberg.

After the performance and workshop discussion, young people from the schools can access Liminal Lines website and blog if they have personal issues to pursue. A blog will be set up on the Liminal Lines website. Young people can become members of Liminal Lines which will give them access to more information through newsletters and the website.

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre

Project title: Improving cancer patient care with mobile phones

The Peter MacCallum cancer centre is a public hospital solely dedicated to cancer research and treatment. Peter Mac's mission is to provide the very best treatment and care for cancer patients. Peter Mac is dedicated to identifying innovative strategies which continuously improve the support and survivorship of cancer patients.

This project, based on a successful UK system (ASyMS), will monitor, and better manage, cancer patient's treatment side-effects, via mobile phone technology, in their own homes. The system alerts treating clinicians about serious side-effects and also provides patient reassurance and tailored self-care information to meet identified needs.

The project is based at Peter Mac in East Melbourne, involving both cancer patients as well as their treating doctors/nurses. Peter Mac is collaborating with the Royal Melbourne Hospital in Parkville for this project, and will therefore also include cancer patients, and their treating doctors/nurses from this site.

Mobile phone technology is used to monitor patient side-effects in their own homes. This information is transmitted directly to the treatment team where it generates alerts for medical intervention/support where required. For mild side-effects the phone provides tailored self-care advice and cancer information to assist in symptom control.

Radio Lollipop Western Australia

Project title: Connecting Children through Radio

Radio Lollipop is a non profit organisation providing care, comfort and play to children in hospital through volunteers and the magic of radio. The organization's radio studio is fully equipped to broadcast to all patients. Adolescence patients are one of the most frequent users of the studio equipment as the radio allows them to connect with.

Children and adolescence who spend a lot of time in hospital for serious or chronic conditions are often isolated from their peers and the wider community as they are often unable to participate in normal activities with their peers either due to the time spent in treatment or the illness itself. Radio Lollipop gives them an opportunity to participate in a fun activity that helps to build their self esteem and confidence as they can take control of the radio program. It gives them a voice and choice in an environment where they don't often have either.

Specifically the radio program broadcasts to 5 hospitals across the state including Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital and therefore allows children and adolescence to connect through the radio program and the phone to patients in other hospitals.

Optus Staff Affiliation: Adam Kudray

Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children

Project title: Teleschool In-Home

The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children is Australia's major special educator whose purpose is to provide educational services to children who have hearing and/or vision impairment, including children with additional disabilities to minimise the impact of deafness and blindness so the children can participate fully in life.

RIDBC Teleschool is a distance education program for families living in rural and remotes areas with a child diagnosed with hearing and/or vision impairment. The service is available from the time the child is diagnosed until school entry. Services are also provided to school age children with a hearing impairment.

The program is based at RIDBC's North Rocks campus and provides assistance to deaf and blind children in all states and territories of Australia (map of student locations attached)

RIDBC Teleschool uses videoconferencing, telephone, email/fax and written correspondence. Videoconference sessions are recorded for follow up work by the RIDBC staff and for the benefit of a parent and/or local support worker who may not have been able to participate in the videoconferencing session.

Optus Staff Affiliation: Matthew Williams

Sir David Martin Foundation

Project title: Creative Youth Initiatives (CYI)– Artworks Program

The Foundation set up in 1990, aims to realise Sir David Martin's dream of an Australian community "where children can grow up in safety with hope and opportunity." Our goal is to get more young people off the streets, away from unhealthy situations and into care and rehabilitation

The Artworks program provides youth aged 16-25 who are facing varied challenges such as homelessness and mental health issues the opportunity to access a professional and accredited visual arts program and the vital emotional support they need to get their lives back on track and to reach their full potential.

Creative Youth Initiatives is a unique arts and music educational service based in Surry Hills in Sydney's inner city for youth aged 16-24 years

The Tafe accredited visual arts program provides materials, skilled tuition and a safe place to create and explore personal issues. The program is complemented by counselling, advocacy and referral to services such as mental health and housing where required. Students have a clear pathway back into formal education and employment.

Shine for Kids

Project title: Crime prevention and legal awareness project for at-risk teenage boys

Shine for Kids provide support services for children and young people with a parent in prison. Our early intervention programs assist young people to maintain positive family relationships, develop coping mechanisms and build resilience. We aim to help them avoid following in their parents footsteps and live up to their individual potential.

The program is a 12-week crime prevention and legal awareness project for early teenage boys who are at risk of turning to criminal activity. Including talks and activities with police, lawyers, a reformed criminal and a sporting personality, as well as drug and alcohol education and fostering development of healthy interests and hobbies.

The program will bring together teenagers with the common experience of parental imprisonment. It will utilise learning methods that engage and inspire the boys, through presenters they can relate to and team building among the group to foster healthy interests and supportive friendships

The legal awareness workshops will utilise an online educational resource called 'Burn Movie'. Representatives from Legal Aid who created this project will run the two sessions using this supporting resource.

A role play activity will also be conducted in which the boys contact Kids Help Line via telephone.

Stewart House

Project title: Children from Taree district visit Stewart House

Stewart House provides short term respite care for public school children in need. During their stay children are provided with optometric, dental and health assessment and essential treatment or referral as well as emotional support. This is balanced with health and educational programs and out of school activities to boost their self-esteem and to promote a healthier lifestyle.

Each year 22 groups of 90 children attend Stewart House for a 12 day break. The 90 children consist of 45 children from a Sydney Metropolitan area and 45 from a Regional area. The children are chosen to attend by their public school, principals for a variety of reasons. We are seeking assistance for the group of children from public schools in Taree district. We are seeking funding for 5 children @ \$1,080 per child for 12 days.

Whilst in residence children participate in health and educational programs and out of school activities that boost self-esteem and promote a healthier lifestyle.

Stewart House objects include the following: To ensure children who attend feel a sense of safety while in the care of Stewart House. To arrange and/or provide health services including optometrical, dental and medical screening and initial treatment and referral as required.

Optus Staff Affiliation –

The Aboriginal Children's Service LTD

Project title: Gootha Gathering - Pathways, Peers and Partnership

ACS facilitates ongoing services to Indigenous families with young children within the inner city community and surrounding suburbs. ACS: 30 years as accredited Indigenous child fostering agency. ACS now focused on addressing immediate issues being faced by young mothers including drug and alcohol education and positive parenting practices

Gootha Gathering is a hub for choice and empowerment for disillusioned and disenfranchised indigenous students. It aims to arrest the despair endemic in many inner urban communities, by offering practical, relevant programs of assistance in education, employment and well-being through self-esteem and motivation-based learning.

GG utilises a platform of established resources and is auspice by a service provider of 30 years, the Aboriginal Children's Service based in Redfern. Providing a well set up and welcoming venue in a central location for students from Dulwich Hill, Tempe, Glebe, Leichhardt, Waterloo and Marrickville.

By providing action based learning programs like -Work Ventures 'I Get It' program. Students learn to dismantle and reassemble a computer and install systems and components and keeping the PC at end of program. Support youth in weak areas like forms and officialdom, sourcing required information to make better choices.

Time For Kids Incorporated

Project title: New Directions

Time For Kids is a community based organisation providing regular respite care for 'at risk' or disadvantaged children in SA by matching them with volunteer caring families usually one weekend a month or during school holidays. We provide kids with positive childhood experiences and role models, acceptance, respect and care. The organisation celebrates its 50th year of operation in 2010 and has supported 4500 children over the past 49 years.

New Directions Program will work to break the cycle of children of prisoners becoming offenders by providing regular respite care and family support to children up to 18 years with parent(s) in prison. We will train and support min. five volunteer households in South Australia to provide regular respite care to between 5-10 children.

The project will connect 5-10 children of prisoners with 5 volunteer carer families for family support and respite care one weekend each month for duration of childhood, reducing likelihood of at risk children becoming offenders, homeless and dropping out of school.

Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition

Project title: A Leadership Course for Migrant & Refugee Women

VIRWC undertakes lobbying and advocacy on behalf of Immigrant and refugee women. Formed in 1998, VIRWC has membership of 60 organizations. We conduct outreach projects to empower Immigrant and refugee women such as our women's leadership courses, employment skills training, community arts, social enterprise and family violence service.

The course content was developed to meet the leadership training needs of immigrant and refugee women in leadership positions. Training will be conducted using interactive strategies like role plays and group discussions. It will run for 7- 10 days covering 35-40 hours covering leadership skills, community development strategies and human rights advocacy.

The project will take place at Hume Global Learning Centre which is a central place in the region, and which is under the Hume City Council. The Council will provide this venue for free to this project.

The training has sessions that teach women how to use IT, particularly how to manage email accounts and develop Facebook profile. They are also taught how to set up a website for their community groups.

Vitea Ltd

Project title: Champ Camp

Vitae was founded to address the despair seen in today's youth. This despair (lack of hope) manifests itself in suicide, violence, drug use and crime. Vitae aims to get these youths out of their despair situation into the Australian bush to skill them to face life with a positive attitude.

Champ Camps are conducted over nine days.

Phase 1: creating skills to meet physiological, safety, and relationship needs.

Phase 2: presenting challenge and team work while enhancing self confidence and oneness with nature.

Phase 3: involving a solo and strategies to look at reactive and proactive behaviours. This leads to the development of strategies for confronting the 'real world' while shaping a happy future.

The Champ Camps are conducted on private property and public land in the vicinity of the Mt Barney National Park about 40 mins drive south of Beaudesert in Queensland.

The aim is to eliminate criminal activity and motivate Participants to study or employment. This results in less fear among the general population; and less resources expended on policing, the justice system and incarceration. Youths, who become employed, contribute to the community through their work and their taxes.

Volunteer Centre of WA

Project title: Homeless Connect Perth 2009

Volunteering WA is WA's peak body for volunteering, providing education, training, support for volunteers and organisations using volunteers; promoting advancement, welfare, health, protection of volunteers and volunteering; providing support, training, resources to 24 Volunteer Resource Centres; delivering specific projects to build and maintain viable communities and overcome barriers to volunteering.

Homeless Connect is a one-stop shop that brings together the entire community to provide free and immediate services to homeless people for a day. It provides access to a range of services that will ultimately assist people who are disadvantaged to find new pathways and connections.

Comprehensive internet will be used to provide immediate access for homeless people to service delivery, medical records, Centrelink, Dept of Housing, personal identification records and legal information. Internet and mobile phones will also be used to provide opportunity for homeless people to reconnect with family and friends.

62% of WA's homeless population is aged 34 or younger and 32% are aged between 12-18 years. This project expects to impact on 500 homeless people on the day.

WAYS Youth Services (Urban Arts Base – UAB)

Project title: Arty Arvos

WAYS is a community organisation whose mission is to work with young people to create pathways to the future. UAB provides a safe, youth friendly environment where young people with mental health issues can regain the confidence and skills necessary to re-engage with education, employment and social and community networks.

UAB (WAYS) aims to increase social inclusion of young people with mental illness by providing free art support groups in the community. These groups will be targeted at young people aged between 15-25 years who are either currently being treated in psychiatric hospitals or have been recently discharged.

The Arty Arvos Project will be held at UAB's creative arts studio in Double Bay over a period of 12 weeks.

By empowering young people to actively participate in their recovery process, Arty Arvos will give young people experiencing mental illness new opportunities to improve their confidence and learn artistic skills. This project will also enable young people to develop new social networks with their peers in the community.

Wimmera Uniting Care

Project title: Beyond Limits: Short Film Festival

Wimmera UnitingCare plays a vital role in supporting and strengthening the lives of many people in the Wimmera region. As a member of the UnitingCare network of the UnitingCare Church in Australia, we are the third largest UnitingCare service provider in Victoria. With more than 220 staff supported by over 250 volunteers and care-providers, we deliver more than 35 programs in the areas of childcare, family support, housing, disability support, counseling and mental health support.

Beyond Limits is a quality touring short film festival created by and about people with a disability, mental health issues and their carers. Inc. My Brother; Tropfest Winner, Future Art Films, and local product

The project is located throughout Central & Western Victoria regional towns. The initial project will go to St Arnaud, Ararat, Murtoa and Charlton. The films will be screened in local Town halls and Cinema's.

Multimedia is an extraordinary accessible medium for mixed abilities and rural areas. People seeing short films in Beyond Limitations will be inspired and empowered to get involved, make their own and run more. This event will link with students in secondary schools studying production through VCAL & VET.

YMCA Victoria Youth & Community Services Inc.

Project title: Connecting Men and their Families: Digital Stories

YMCA Victoria is a 156 year old, leading community development organization, committed to providing cutting edge programs for the disadvantaged regardless of age, religion, ethnicity, gender or social class.

This project will create short multimedia stories, consisting of a spoken script, photographs or video, music and other sounds. These stories will be personal reflections on men's emotional journeys, joys and struggles. The project will engage men and families who can relate to the storyteller's experiences.

This project will involve participants from Melbourne, surrounding metropolitan areas, regional and rural Victoria. Story workshops will be conducted in Melbourne, using the premises and facilities at branches of Relationships Australia. The digital stories will be created using computers and software at Monash University's Gippsland Campus.

Digital stories are created using information technology - computers with audio, photograph and video editing software. A library of engaging stories will be available via community organisations and online so those in need or geographically isolated can access these resources. DVDs and websites will include contact details for support services.

Youth Focus Inc

Project title: Connect, Change and Celebrate

Youth Focus provides prevention and early intervention strategies to address youth suicide, depression and self-harm. As a Tier Two level service provider for mental health services, Youth Focus liaises closely with Level Tier One organisations (schools, GP's) and Tier Three (CAMHS) and Tier Four level (acute patients) organisations.

To provide Albany and the surrounding environs with an essential service to implement prevention and early intervention strategies to young people (12-18 years) at risk of suicide, depression or self-harm. The project will plug gaps within the community to address escalating suicides and deliver education and information workshops to schools and families as an awareness strategy

The project is available to all 10,400 young people in the region. Albany will be the centre point for the project with parent workshops available to each of the 6,700 families. Albany has a population of 31,500 (2.8% are indigenous) with a further 18,800 in the environs (4.9% are indigenous)

The roadmap of current programs to address the prevention of youth suicide, depression and self-harm comprises youth counselling, family counselling, mentoring, group work, peer support camps and program, Life Skills program and crisis response information. These services are designed for young people who have been considered difficult to engage with.

Youth Off the Streets (YOTS)

Project title: MHC Permaculture Garden

YOTS is a non-denominational, non-discriminatory charity assisting young people 12 - 21 years with issues of homelessness, abuse and neglect, exclusion from school and drug and alcohol dependency. We provide young people with the education, life skills, support and psychological stability to be able to find employment and live independently.

The young people attending Matthew Hogan College (MHC) are building a permaculture garden that will produce organic food to help feed the students and our Southern Highlands residents. This will be hands-on learning, incorporating their curriculum into practical learning.

Matthew Hogan College, which provides education for young people living in our Southern Highlands medium-long term residential programs. The students have been identified as having complex needs and challenging behaviours. Matthew Hogan College is supported by the Optus Workplace Giving program.

The students will be using technology to research, design and solve problems, such as record keeping, data collection, analysis, evaluation and measurement.
