MINUTES
YARRA DRUG AND HEALTH FORUM MEETING

MONDAY March 4th 2019
Meeting at 12.30pm-2pm
Richmond Town Hall

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of COUNTRY

APOLOGIES:

Present: Peter Wearne (Chair) Greg Denham (EO YDHF), Nick Wallis (HRVic), Sally Mitchell (Resident), Jenny Vran (TOE), Julia Bennett-Mitrovski (CoY), Michael Van Vliet (CoY), Jen Black (FLS), Kevan Myers (Nexus), Gulliver McLeod (SSDP)

2. ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: minutes of the February meeting were accepted

3. PRESENTATION:

GUEST SPEAKER:

Gulliver McLeod – Students for Sensible Drug Policy

Gulliver spoke about the campaign called ‘Be Heard Not Harmed’ that was focussed on raising awareness about the need for Pill Testing and drug testing programs. He described their activities at music festivals such as Rainbow Serpent. Discussion centered on policy barriers and police actions at open air events. YDHF congratulated Gulliver on his appearance on the ABC QANDA program.

4. BUSINESS ARISING:

- EC Meeting March 4th – Chair notified membership that as previously announced the EO has tendered his resignation and will leave YDHF on March 15th. The Chair stated that the EC had discussed option for a replacement for the EO role and were discussing the issue with cohealth as auspicing agency. The Chair thanked Greg for his contribution over the past 9 years and the outstanding work undertaken to have the MSIR established in North Richmond. A farewell will be held on March 20th at 6pm.
• **Media report in The Age re MSIR** – membership discussed the recent Opinion Piece from James Pusciutto regarding the evaluation of the MSIR. The piece was somewhat skewed toward the need to evaluate the MSIR about how many people are abstinent form drugs once they start using the centre.

• **Meeting with Mr Martin Foley** – Chair and Sally Mitchell met with Mr Foley to discuss the YDHF. Issues raised included the ongoing funding for YDHF and a possibility of additional funding to increase the hours for the EO. Mr Foley spoke highly of the Forum’s contribution toward the establishment of the MSIR. Mr Foley said that he will contact DHHS to discuss YDHF funding.

• **VAADA Conference** – EO and Chair along with other attendees gave a glowing assessment of the VAADA Conference. The event was very well attended with nearly 600 people registered. EO spoke about his presentation re the MSIR which was well attended.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

• **IFDS Day Feb 25th** – EO gave a summary of his attendance and speech at the event to commemorate all those that had been lost to drugs.

6. **CURRENT NEWS, UPDATES AND DRUG USE PATTERNS:**

• Heroin use is increasing amongst homeless people in the CBD
• Despite drug seizures drugs are still available, switch to other harder to detect drugs e.g. Ketamine
• Peter reported that he had met with Eastern Health Family Violence AOD workers
• Membership heard that heroin use was increasing amongst people that are homeless in the city and that vulnerable people were being driven into squats and other poor living conditions
• The PHN was holding a forum into homelessness and dual diagnosis in March

7. **EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT:**

• Circulated

8. **YDHF Meeting: April 1st 2019 – 2019 dates to appear on YDHF Website**