



YARRA DRUG AND HEALTH FORUM MEETING - MINUTES

MONDAY, August 1st 2011

Meeting held 12.30pm-2pm at:

Fitzroy Town Hall
The Reading Room
201 Napier Street
(corner of Condell Street)
Fitzroy

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.
2. APOLOGIES.
3. ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES.

The previous minutes were accepted.

PRESENTATION: The Mayor of the City of Yarra, Ms Alison Clarke, spoke about the challenges and issues facing local government when developing of drug policy at the community level. Ms Clarke referred to the Council's Safer Yarra Action Plan and how that document outlined the key areas that the council is focussing on in addressing drug and alcohol issues. Three of the substances that were being addressed by the CoY included harms from tobacco, alcohol and heroin.

Each of these substances presented council with its own challenges and concerns. Smoking was an area that had received much focus due to increased concerns about smoking in areas of higher risk to others such as playgrounds and public events.

Alcohol use was also problematic in many circumstances, particularly public drinking and behaviour of patrons in and around the Swann Street nightclub precinct. Local Law 8 had recently been evaluated again and the outcomes from that evaluation being carefully looked at. The evaluation is available on the CoY website.

A community based response to alcohol and other drug issues

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Heroin use, which had also received significant media attention since the council vote in May to support a SIF, was an ongoing concern and much had been reported about overdoses and public amenity issues in North Richmond. Significantly, over 70% of calls into the CoY providing feedback about the SIF vote by council were supportive. Ms Clarke stated that she had received support from several other municipalities and will raise this issue at a meeting of ALGA seeking endorsement.

5. BUSINESS ARISING:

- **Licensing issues in Swann Street Richmond and ARC Linkage Grant:**

Mr Nick Thomson from the University of Melbourne's Nossal Institute for Global Health and Mr Matthew Mullins, owner of several licensed premises in Swann Street and Bridge Road, Richmond, attended the forum to discuss opportunities and potential collaboration related to concerns about patron behaviour in and around the Swann Street Nightclub Precinct. Mr Mullins agreed that many of the licensees were responsible and had concerns about patron behaviour however given the link to several sporting arena in the area it was difficult to control the behaviour of everyone. Mr Thomson indicated that there was interest at the UoM to apply for funding for research into the issues around the Swann Street Nightclub Precinct.

Action: EO will meet with Mr Thomson and Mr Mullins and other representatives from licensed premises to discuss potential collaboration and research grant applications and report back as required.

- **Election of Executive Committee – Chair position filled – EC nominations called for:**

Executive Officer reported that Mr Peter Wearne had been re-elected to the position of Chair of the YDHF unopposed. The Forum congratulated Mr Wearne on his ongoing commitment to the Forum. Nominations were being accepted for the remaining positions on the EC with closing date being August 5th. Nomination forms were handed out at the meeting.

Action: EO to report back on outcomes from nominations for YDHF EC positions at next meeting.

- **YDHF 15 year anniversary event – 5-7pm Oct 6th RTH**

In order to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the YDHF a special forum will be held on October 6th at the Richmond Town Hall. This event will hopefully bring together many of the people who have been influential in the success of the Forum over the past 15 years. A special guest speaker will be invited to address the meeting with the focus on a reflection of the work done by the YDHF during that period.

Action: EO to plan and prepare for YDHF 15th Anniversary event and report back on progress.

- **Eviction of Tenants from OoH residences – further correspondence Kate Waite**

EO reported that he had received correspondence from Kate Waite from Office of Housing in response to YDHF request on information related to data on evictions from OoH premises, particularly those that related to drug offences. EO reported that the numbers were very low, in fact only one recorded for drug offences. Forum discussed this and indications that members were still keen to hear from OoH about the new legislation and policies developed by OoH.

Action: EO to liaise with OoH central level to determine availability of their staff to present at a future YDHF meeting.

- **Letter to DoJ re condoms in prisons**

EO had sent a letter of congratulations to the Attorney General Robert Clark congratulating him on the DoJ decision to allow condoms in prisons. To be posted on YDHF website

- **Letter to Richard Wynne MP**

EO reported that he had drafted a letter of thanks to Richard Wynne for his presentation at the previous YDHF and that the letter also requested that the forum be engaged in discussions regarding the development of the State Opposition's future drug policy plans, as Richard had suggested. The forum discussed this opportunity and suggested that Mr Gavin Jennings, State Opposition spokesperson on health who has had links with the Forum should also be written to about this issue.

Action: EO to write to both Richard Wynne and Gavin Jennings and post letters on YDHF website and report back on progress.

6. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT – matters discussed -for information/discussion:

- Eviction of Tenants from OoH residences – further correspondence Kate Waite
- YDHF Community Forum July 21st - feedback
- YDHF 15 year anniversary event – Oct 6th RTH
- Swann Street Richmond Licensees - update
- Election of Executive Committee – Chair position filled
- ACSO Alcohol Diversionary Program Submission
- Good Liver article
- Request for EO to speak at conference in Mauritius

7. SUPERVISED INJECTING FACILITY WORKING GROUP UPDATE – for information/discussion:

- Next meeting August 2nd at NJC
- CoY Grant \$8000 and BI - CRE Grant Submission
- 'Sign on' campaign - update
- Meeting with Alastair Urquhart – Lobbyist
- Letter to local State member re support for SIF
- YDHF Community Forum July 21st - feedback
- BI CRE Colloquium July 18th

8. CURRENT NEWS, UPDATES AND DRUG USE PATTERNS:

Members reported that about 70% of clients at primary health care services and drug treatment were heroin related.

Information about a 'Whole of Government' enquiry into drugs and alcohol in Victoria – similar to a Penington report – will be released soon including the make-up of the expert advisory committee.

Synthetic drugs such as Khronic were becoming popular with reports of several cannabis type substances on the market and available over the internet.

It was suggested that a topic of a future YDHF Community Forum could be a presentation on drug trends and substances available over the internet such as Khronic etc.

9. OTHER BUSINESS:

- **ACSO Alcohol Diversionary Program Submission**

A request from ACSO seeking support for a grant submission seeking funding for an alcohol diversion scheme had been received. The membership was reminded that the YDHF does not provide 'letters of support' to organisations for these types of applications given the representation on the Forum and the clear conflict of interest that this would lead to.

- **Good Liver article**

The EO had been asked to write an article for the Hepatitis Victoria magazine 'Good Liver' and it is to be posted on YDHF website.

- **Request for EO to speak at conference in Mauritius**

EO reported that he had received an invitation to attend a conference in Mauritius in late September to present a key note address on harm reduction at the local level and how to engage local agencies in problem-solving drug issues. The funding was to be provided by a local NGO called CUT. The invitation is not confirmed and will be subject to the availability of the EO.

10. WORKER'S REPORT: tabled for feedback/discussion -available on YDHF Website.

11. NEXT MEETING: 12.30pm Monday September 5th 2011:

**Fitzroy Town Hall
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Fitzroy

Guest Speakers: presentation by Ms Cheryl Vickery who will speak about the role of the Billabong BBQ outreach program that seeks to engage marginalised and disconnected Aboriginal people experiencing alcohol and drug related harms who are living and visiting the City of Yarra'