

4th Annual VSCN Conference - 15 November 2006 “What is your local solution?”

The Victorian Safe Communities Network (VSCN) held its 4th Annual Conference, on Wednesday 15 November, 2006 with the theme “What is your local solution?” Over 60 registrants from across Victoria and other states, gathered at the Darebin Community Centre in Melbourne, Australia, to celebrate the VSCN’s 10th birthday.

The WHO Safe Community programs in the Cities of Hume and Latrobe were designated in 1996, which was the same year the VSCN was born and also the year when Community Safety Month (CSM) began.

In keeping with the 10th anniversary celebrations theme, Tim Hardiman and Jan Shield, VSCN Co-Chairs, opened the day by announcing some special recognition presentations to:

- The three Victorian WHO safe communities– the Cities of Hume, Latrobe and Melbourne – each of which was re-accredited in 2006; and
- All our CSM Coordinators over the 10 years since CSM celebrations began in 1996.

They then inducted our first two VSCN Life Members – Henk Harberts and Mark Hennessy – in recognition of their services to the network over the past decade.

Jan Shield and Tim Hardiman, Co Chairs of the VSCN - with the photograph taken at the first VSCN community safety promotion celebration, Safety Sunday at Roxburgh Park during Safe Community Week in February 1996 – from which CSM began.



VSCN congratulates Hume City, Latrobe City and City of Melbourne on their longstanding commitment to community safety as WHO Safe Communities.



Tim and Jan presented certificates of appreciation to our CSM Coordinators – Lisa Purchase and Brigid Henley



Tim and Jan inducted the first two VSCN Life Members – Mark Hennessy and Henk Harberts

After the presentations, Tim introduced our keynote speakers to set the themes for the day:

- Nicola Rabot, Department of Human Services and a team from the City of Casey and City of Greater Geelong reported on the recently extended SAFE Start Program which aims to improve health and well being for, and reduce injuries, amongst infants and children to maximise their life opportunities. The state-wide communication strategy for the poisoning prevention project was also introduced.
- David Chalke, Australia SCAN gave an extremely engaging presentation on changing community demographics, the findings of recent community surveys and the implications for community safety programs;
- Dr Dale Hanson Mackay Whitsunday Safe Community Program in Queensland discussed his social network analysis findings and the very significant implications for building social capital in and through a safe community coalition
- Lisa Purchase gave us a fantastic ‘all singing all dancing’ snapshot of the best of CSM 2006 – and what a great 10th CSM it has been this year in Victoria.



The Department of Human Services, City of Casey and City of Greater Geelong SAFE Start and Poisons Prevention Program



David Chalke, Australia SCAN with Tim Hardiman

There was something very different about CSM this year – not just the magnificent work done by all the VSCN members and others across the state in organising events, and not just the great coordination of the month by the Department of Justice, and in particular by Lisa Purchase. What is different is that people not directly connected with CSM planning or organisation were this year telling us in the VSCN that it was Community Safety Month in October. The reach and potential for this safety promotion program is immense and growing.



The VSCN / CSM team with Mayor of the City of Melbourne, John So – at the re-accreditation of the City of Melbourne as a WHO Safe Community on 30 October 2006, the last day of CSM 2006 in Victoria.



Dale Hanson – seeking a balance in the two kinds of social capital – social connectedness and social entrepreneurship

The conference themes reflected our VSCN themes for the past and next 10 years – local safe communities solving local community safety problems; advocacy for injury prevention and safety promotion policies and programs; gathering the evidence; CSM; and connecting with our diverse communities. The workshops which followed focused on two themes – “Is your Program Street Legal?” looking at ways to plan for and manage major increases in population in small communities; and “Connecting with your Community” exploring partnerships across diverse communities.

The ‘street legal’ stream discussed presentations on responding to spontaneous gatherings, safety at major sporting events, like the Commonwealth Games, and planning for visitors to small communities, using these

as a basis to help assess risks and develop an emergency management plan to minimise, prepare for, and respond to identified risks.



The “Connecting With Your Community” workshop presenters.

In the ‘connecting with your community’ stream the first municipality based Men’s Health Officer in Victoria, in the City of Casey, presented on the local men’s health programs particularly working on reducing depression and suicide; local police officers discussed responding to CALD communities; and a Metropolitan Fire Brigades officer gave a passionate presentation on a very innovative and sensitive program working in partnership with indigenous communities. A vibrant discussion followed around these topics, and the recognition that there are a set of common core values pervading all cultures.

The end of the day conference ‘wrap up’ was presented by Michael Bourne, VSCN Executive Member, who noted the emergence of ‘prevention’ and ‘passion’ into the wider debate, alongside the many already well established ‘p’ words of ‘people’, ‘partnerships’, ‘programs’ and ‘policies’. As David Chalke said “prevention is not a headline grabber, no one has yet written the TV series on injury prevention or crime prevention” but who knows when this may happen.

Michael Bourne, VSCN Executive Member and Co Chair of the ASCF presenting the conference ‘wrap up’.



At last year’s conference Michael presented a paper on ‘neighbourhood safety teams’, proposing that the role of Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) groups be developed to provide an interface between local (municipal) community safety programs and individual households. In his closing remarks Michael was able to report that in October 2006, the newly formed NHWAustralasia had adopted this proposal as its future direction and had resolved to work with the Australian Safe Communities Foundation (ASCF) to make this happen across Australia and New Zealand.

The accreditation of the ASCF as a WHO Safe Community Certifying Centre was also announced by Michael at the conference. The ASCF is now authorised by the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden to assess applications to join the Safe Community Network and designate Safe Community programs on its behalf in any country across the globe.

Michael also noted with pride the many achievements of the VSCN and VSCN members over the past year, including:

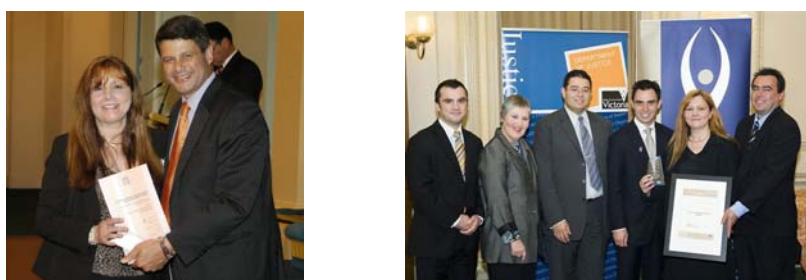
- ‘cutting the cake’ at Latrobe in February, to mark our 10th anniversary
- The redesignation of our three safe communities, Latrobe, Hume and Melbourne



- The workshop on sustaining the network presented by the VSCN team at the national Australian Injury Prevention Network Conference – with VSCN Executive members Jan Shield and Erin Cassell being recognised for their contributions to injury prevention practice and research over many years.



- The Premiers Award for Excellence in Multicultural Affairs presented to the MFB, Victoria Police and RCH Safety Centre; and the Victorian Community Safety and Crime Prevention ‘Practitioner’s Award’ presented at Parliament House by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.



- As well as two CSM forums to plan the CSM program, and
- Three very successful Quarterly Seminars, of which two were held in regional centres – in Latrobe in February and Bendigo in August.

In summary, Michael said that “everyone he had asked said that they had a great day at the conference, that they had learned new material, met new people, had some really in depth discussions on new topics, and many had already taken action on ideas presented during the day.” “The extensive networking was very visible and vibrant.” He added that “the report card on the year gone, and the past 10 years, is a great story to tell.”

On closing the conference, Jan Shield thanked all the participants and our many partners and supporters, and thanked all the VSCN Executive as the Conference Organising Committee, commenting that “they had again done a fantastic and very professional job, and we are eagerly anticipating our fifth annual conference in November 2007”. Jan especially thanked Barbara Minuzzo, and the Royal Children’s Hospital Safety Centre for all their support throughout the years, including by providing the VSCN Secretariat.

Barbara Minuzzo, VSCN Executive Member, responding to the vote of thanks for the Royal Children’s Hospital Safety Centre, an accredited WHO Safe Community Affiliate Support Centre.



After the conference closed, delegates and guests gathered over cocktails to continue their networking, share fond memories of the past decade of community safety promotion, and share ideas about the 10 years ahead.

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