



## **VSCN Quarterly Network Meeting And Practitioner Workshop 16th February 2005 Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre**

16th February, 2005 was a big start to another big year for the Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre and the Victorian Safe Communities Network (VSCN), with three very important meetings being held at the Hospital, taking up the whole day-

1. Firstly the **VSCN Executive** met early in the morning and reported real progress on its strategic directions, including:
  - ❑ setting the theme for the Quarterly Network Meeting in May as " Youth Homelessness",
  - ❑ noting the inclusion of safety promotion principles and practice in the draft National Injury Prevention Plan - the Plan is expected to be recommended to Ministers for their endorsement in July or August 2005, with detailed action planning to follow that stage;
  - ❑ noting that Community Safety Month will be celebrated nation-wide in October 2005 in 5 of our 8 states – the 9th year of Community Safety Month in Victoria, with many local community safety committees already planning their events for another great month;
  - ❑ setting the date for the 3rd VSCN Annual Conference and Dinner on 17 November 2005.
2. Then the **VSCN Quarterly Network Meeting** " Early Intervention & Multi Effect Actions- New directions in Health and Safety Promotion", was held from mid morning with a light lunch to follow, with around 80 network members including 10 people who had not been along to a network meeting before.

**Professor Frank Oberklaid**, Director RCH Centre For Community Child Health presented on: 'Developmental trajectory and the life course; increased investment in children as an important evidence-based public policy initiative'

There is now overwhelming research evidence that major challenges faced by Australian society - obesity and its medical associations, mental health problems, aggression and criminality, welfare dependency and illiteracy - have their origins in pathways that begin much earlier in life, often in early childhood. Public policy that focuses on the treatment of entrenched problems is unsustainable - treatment is expensive and efficacy is often poor. There is an accumulating body of research that points to the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of prevention and early intervention programs designed to optimise a child's developmental trajectory and ultimate life course. Increasingly we will see a recognition that an evidence-based policy focused on children to be a sound investment in the country's future prosperity.

**Dr. Sarah Lantz**, Royal Children’s Hospital Adolescent Health presented “ Sex Work and Study: the new demands facing young people and their implications for health and wellbeing” – reviewing the additional pressures on young people as they look for pathways to balance working lives with increasingly expensive university training

**Helen Stokes**, Melbourne University Youth Research Centre presented on “Youth Economic Participation and Mental Health and Wellbeing: Evaluation and Learnings” – presenting the work of a number of very inclusive community programs for young people

**Lesley Hyde and Helen Thomas**, Catholic Education Office presented on “ Schools as Core Social Centres Project- Promoting and Developing School/Community Partnerships

The Schools as Core Social Centre project, funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), is designed to assist leaders to address school wellbeing in a sustained way, with an emphasis on prevention and fostering community partnerships and the development of social capital. It is understood that there are clear links between the promotion of wellbeing and learning and teaching.



Helen Rowan, Manager of the RCH Family Services (centre) and Barbara Minuzzo Safety Centre, Senior Project Coordinator, and VSCN Secretary (right) with the new members of the **Victoria-Wide Safety Centre Network** now increased to 60 centres across the whole of Victoria

At the conclusion of the VSCN Network Meeting, Helen Rowan, Manager of the RCH Family Services, and Barbara Minuzzo Safety Centre, Senior Project Coordinator, and VSCN Secretary, announced 20 new members of the **Victoria wide Safety Centre Satellite Centres Network**, bringing the total network of satellite centres across the state to 60 – each of which has been equipped with a comprehensive set of safety displays, educational materials and product samples. These centres are very significant developments, which will strengthen and embed health and safety and wellbeing networks particularly in regional and local communities all round Victoria. The Safety Centre and the VSCN have agreed to work together to continue to strengthen and grow this metropolitan, regional and rural network of satellite centres.

3. Then, in the afternoon we held a **workshop with safety ambassadors** from the VSCN, the Safety Centre and Monash University Accident Research Centre (affiliate support centres), the Australian Injury Prevention Network (AIPN) and the newly formed Australian Safe Communities Foundation - to explore areas for collaboration and development.

The global, statewide and local community safety networks are continually growing - every day sees another stage in the culture change towards making our communities safer places to live, learn, work, play and travel.

Michael Bourne  
Co-Chair, VSCN