

Thursday 9 December, 2010

HEALTH PROMOTION TRAILBLAZERS HONOURED AT VICHEALTH AWARDS

Victoria's champions in promoting good health were named at the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) annual awards ceremony last night.

Winners include researchers who uncovered a high level of discrimination in sports for gay and lesbian people, initiatives to reduce alcohol problems at the footy, a survey that revealed Victorians want junk food sponsorship out of sports, surfing lessons for disabled people and a shire-wide program to prevent racism.

VicHealth CEO Todd Harper said each winner had demonstrated outstanding and creative approaches to health promotion and illness prevention over the past 12 months.

"These awards recognise outstanding achievements and the original contributions being undertaken by VicHealth's partners to promote good health around the state," Mr Harper said.

"Health is usually thought of as treating illness after people become unwell, so sometimes health promotion projects aren't as widely acknowledged – but they are vitally important. The people who drive these projects are trailblazers whose work will have a positive impact on the community for years to come."

ABC radio broadcaster Lindy Burns and *The Age* Health Editor Julia Medew received awards for Outstanding Journalism on Health Promotion Issues for 2010.

Mr Harper added: "While more journalists are switching on to health promotion issues as hot topics, Lindy and Julia have consistently kept up the conversation all year. We were thrilled to name them as our top journalists for the year."

A special award for contribution to illness prevention was awarded to researchers at Deakin University who led a groundbreaking study into how early intervention can save lives and save money for the health system.

The *Assessing Cost-Effectiveness of Prevention* five-year study involved 130 academics who studied a range of illness prevention measures, such as weight loss programs and junk food tax, to find the best value for money.

Mr Harper said: "This extraordinary body of work was launched at VicHealth in mid 2010 and has no doubt influenced policy and decisions at the highest level about where health dollars are best invested. It is projects like these that really set the bar high for future health promotion activities."

And the winners of the 2010 VicHealth Awards are....

Professor David Hill Award for Knowledge and Translation

Come Out to Play – The Sports experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people in Victoria Victoria University. The first research of its kind to identify barriers to participation in sports faced by LGBT Victorians.

/.....winners continue on the next page

Environments for health (joint winners)

- Whittlesea Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity (LEAD) Project, Whittlesea Council. A major new program to improve community acceptance of cultural diversity and reducing race-based discrimination.
- Healthy Sporting Environments CATI, Claire Tobin – PhD Public Health Student. This community attitudes survey provided vital evidence of Victorian community support for reducing community sporting clubs' reliance on alcohol and junk food sales and sponsorship.

Systems for health

- Building capacity in alcohol policy making in the AFL Players' Association, Australian Football League Players' Association (AFLPA). The Association has taken a leadership role in developing and implementing alcohol policy reform to tackle risky drinking.

Communications (joint winners)

- Face to Face – Unity in Diversity, City of Greater Dandenong. Highlighting the achievements of Springvale residents and capturing their pride in their community and connection to the local area with a DVD and other projects.
- ruMAD? (Are You Making a Difference?) Eumemmerring, Foundation for Young Australians. This project links experienced Foundation for Young Australians facilitators with teachers to promote positive messages about youth, community and social change.

Advocacy (joint winners)

- Building on Our Strengths: a framework to reduce race-based discrimination and support diversity in Victoria. This project is designed to support organisations and communities to incorporate racial discrimination into their day-to-day business.
- National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA). Consisting of 44 health and community organisations, the NAAA advocates for legislation and social change to reduce alcohol harm.

Community Development

- Surfing for Under-Represented Groups, Surfing Victoria. This program increases physical activity for Indigenous, disabled and people from rural and remote areas.

Organisational Development

- Working Together Against Violence, Women's Health Victoria. This Australia-first project with the trucking industry is proving that the workplace as an ideal place to promote gender equity and the prevention of violence against women.

Participation and Skill Development

- Preventing Violence Against Women Short Course development, Deakin University. A course designed to be delivered to workplaces to provide them with the skills to plan, implement and evaluate initiatives that aims to prevent violence against women before it occurs.

Outstanding journalism on health promotion issues (joint winners)

- 774 ABC Melbourne Drive Program, Lindy Burns, Erin Mathews and Tom Wright. The ABC Drive team has a genuine interest in health promotion issues and furthering the debate.
- Julia Medew, The Age Health Editor. Awarded for consistent, thorough and high quality reportage of health promotion issues.

Special Award for Contribution to Illness Prevention Knowledge

- *Assessing Cost-Effectiveness on Prevention* report, Deakin University. Professor Rob Carter and Anne Magnus led this groundbreaking analysis of 134 health promotion/illness prevention measures, with dozens of recommendations that strongly support more spending on illness prevention, but also warn that not all prevention measures are wise investments.