

# Taskforce role to continue

## HEALTH

BY CARLY WERNER

### Region

WIMMERA Drug Action Taskforce will have a co-ordinator for at least another year.

Grampians Community Health, Uniting Wimmera, Wimmera Health Care Group, Horsham Sports and Community Club, Hillross

Horsham and Merrium Financial Group Horsham have provided a combined \$30,000 to continue the co-ordinator role for two days a week.

The taskforce focuses on education, prevention and early intervention strategies to reduce the harms of alcohol and other drugs.

Taskforce co-ordinator Sally Pymmer said the group

received no government funding and relied on donations, which made it difficult to plan projects and limited the taskforce's abilities.

"With the activities and campaigns we run, you do need quite a bit of time to do things, but we are limited to planning projects within only six months to a year," she said.

"We are also limited in

what grants we can apply for, because often grants are for yearly projects and we are not sure if we will have a co-ordinator to be able to carry them out."

Ms Pymmer said although the taskforce received funding for 2016-17, there was no guarantee it would receive funding this year for the co-ordinator position.

"With organisations under

increasing financial pressure, there was a risk the taskforce would be without a co-ordinator," she said.

"This would have severely limited the work it could do. "It is great to see organisations seeing the taskforce's value - we are very grateful for their support."

Ms Pymmer said the taskforce had also received a Local Drug Action Team grant

so we can provide a training package and hopefully train facilitators so they can run the sessions themselves," Ms Pymmer said.

## Little steps to healthy month

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WIMMERA families are on notice - it's time for a challenge.

Wimmera Drug Action Taskforce has encouraged people to complete a different activity each day next month as part of the 31-day August Winter Challenge.

Taskforce co-ordinator Sally Pymmer said the group ran the challenge last year and received positive feedback. "It's about us taking a more preventative approach, so people don't take alcohol or drugs in the first place," she said.

"The activities can be anything at all.

"We had people say last year one of their activities was smiling at strangers, and they were amazed at the response they received.

"It might be going for a walk around the block or doing something physical, complimenting people, or writing down something positive about yourself.

"It's a bit of fun, and we hope it can give people confidence that they can set small challenges for themselves and achieve them."

Ms Pymmer said taking time out from social media was

another challenge people could try.

"We got a lot of positive feedback last year from people who did that, and people said they really valued the extra time they had with their families by switching off for a day," she said.

"Other challenges like FebFast and Dry July are only for adults, but this is something the whole family can do."

Ms Pymmer said people could register by calling her on 5362 1200 or emailing sally.p@grampianscommunityhealth.org.au.

- CARLY WERNER



GET MOVING: Wimmera Drug Action Taskforce co-ordinator Sally Pymmer takes a walk around May Park to promote the taskforce's August Challenge. Picture: CARLY WERNER