

QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS ALLIANCE INC MANDURAH WA

The project setting

Quality Relationships Alliance Inc. is a new Mandurah organisation; supported by the City of Mandurah and developed by an alliance of community individuals, organisations and groups who came together in a community can do spirit to develop strategies to enable individuals and families in Mandurah to improve the quality of their relationships at home, in the workplace and within the wider community.

The City of Mandurah is located 72 kms South of Perth Western Australia and is known for its sparkling waterways and is the fastest growing regional centre in WA and the gateway to the South West.

Why is the project needed?

This project is needed for a number of reasons that are not mutually exclusive but are intrinsically connected and interwoven. These include the high levels of marriage breakdown experienced by families, the lack of community networks and isolation, burn out among human service providers and a general lack of knowledge of relationship issues.

What are you trying to do in this project?

Quality Relationships Alliance believes that the building blocks of a strong and connected community depend on the quality of relationships. The long term goal for QRA is to have a well connected city where people feel valued and have many quality relationships. Not just a quality relationship between you and your neighbours, but quality relationships within your home – with your partner, your children, your parents or other

family and friends; quality relationship with yourself, quality relationships within the workplace, and quality relationships between service providers and between service providers and clients.

QRA believe:

- It is Quality Relationships that are the vital building blocks of strong, healthy and enjoyable communities.
- Strong communities have networks that protect vulnerable people and create opportunities for people to participate more fully in work and community life.
- All people in our community deserve the opportunity to strengthen their relationships, regardless of age, income, gender, race or creed.
- Investments in building Quality Relationships in families, schools, workplace and the wider community are investments in the future of our community and our nation.



- Any community strategy aimed at the strengthening of relationships will require services aimed at prevention, early intervention and education as well as services that can assist the individual or family in crisis.

How are you going to go about it?

QRA will develop strategies to enable individuals and families in Mandurah to improve the quality of their relationships at home, in the workplace and within the wider community. This will be achieved by promoting quality, relationships, enhancing community networks, and providing lifelong education, training and development opportunities for individuals, human service providers and community groups. QRA have developed 4 interlocking strategies to achieve this:

- Provision of networking, support and training for Human Service Providers. This will be achieved through regular network meetings, linking workers with others for debriefing, supervision and professional development, establishing a resource center and database of human relationship services in Mandurah.
- Raising public awareness of the value of quality relationships. This will be achieved through developing a public relations strategy that raises community awareness and promotes services
- Mobilising partners and volunteers. This will be achieved through recruiting and training volunteers to provide support and information on local relationship resources.
- The provision of practical proactive preventative relationship educational services that the community wants and values. This will be achieved through coordinating and promoting lifelong learning relationship education across the life cycle in collaboration with other agencies, whilst ensuring there is adequate feedback from the community that the relationship education meets the community's need.

A SECOND LOOK

The following projects were introduced in previous issues of the Bulletin or in 'A First Glimpse'. This is an update on their progress.

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Project update

The last six months for QRA have been a fever of activity. The beginnings of the journey for QRA presented a number of frustrations in getting themselves operational (see before and after pictures), which to some degree could have hindered the development from its embryonic stage to that of a fledgling community NFP organisation. Despite these initial frustrations however, the support, determination, commitment and enthusiasm of its members, Board of Management, staff and Volunteers, have enabled QRA to strive towards its goals and Shared Vision. QRA have built on existing quality relationships and formed many new ones within its local community towards fostering the building and strengthening of the local Mandurah Community.

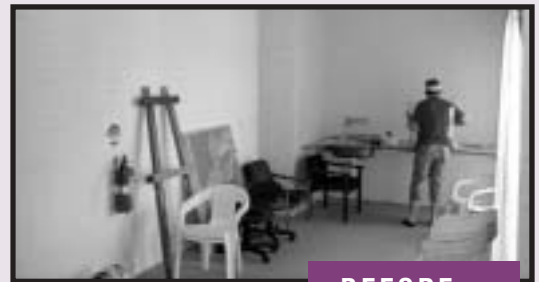
What have you been doing in the last six months?

In the last 6 months QRA have:

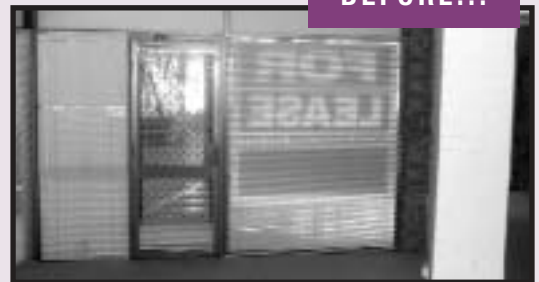
Offered a number of network opportunities which has seen membership increase. QRA also thanked its many volunteers (which are steadily growing in numbers) in December with a celebration prior to the holiday period.

Developed and initiated a number of partnerships premised on the principles of cooperation and collaboration. In particular QRA played a key part in facilitating the coming together of local agencies to work together to form an on-line community directory. This directory is a valuable resource for the Peel community, providing up-to-date information on agencies and types of services, as well as the facility to register new agencies and update information on line. This website can be viewed at www.peeldirect.com.au/commdir/

Worked in partnership with other Stronger Families Stronger Communities Projects

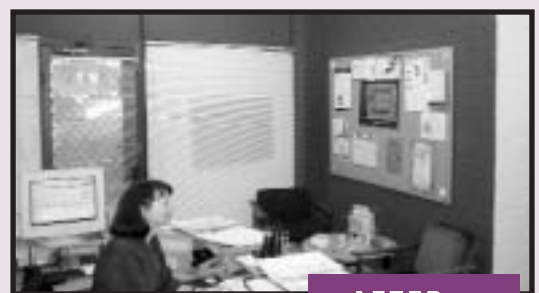


BEFORE...



namely the Community Builders. This was achieved through joint participation in:

- **Family Support Days** QRA worked closely with the City of Mandurah Community Builders and participated in the Falcon Family Centre "Community Day". This involved setting up an information stall providing information to community members on the organisation of QRA, the value of quality relationships and a calendar of events/ educational and training opportunities happening locally.



AFTER...





QRA Display at Peel Resource Expo.



QRA Resource Centre.

- **Small focus groups** QRA participated in co-facilitating an initial small focus group meeting in partnership with the Community Builder at Coodanup. This opportunity enabled a number of young people of Coodanup to begin to identify and express some of their ideas towards fostering the building and strengthening of their particular local community.
- **Childrens Art Festival Exhibition** QRA also participated in the local Children's Art Day coordinated by the Central Mandurah Community Builder. A big thank you goes out to our Administration Assistant Theresa, who put her many talents to use in setting up and running an information stall. This again provided a wonderful opportunity to raise public awareness about the value of quality relationships and the role modelling of the community development principles of collaboration and cooperation.

QRA are also delighted to be able to work in partnership with the City of Mandurah, Coodanup Community Builder, during Harmony Week, through providing the resources for a drumming workshop and hire of equipment to raise awareness and celebrate the diversity that exists within our particular community and to promote harmony.

QRA also worked in partnership with a number of other government and non government organisations during Child Protection week. These included a feature in the QRA newsletter on "Strengthening Relationships with Children" provided by the local Mandurah Parents Place, a display at the QRA office of information on parenting and other related articles and brochures.

Peel Resource Expo QRA participated in the local Peel Resource Expo. This provided the opportunity to raise public awareness on the value of quality relationships and the sharing of information on relationship education and training opportunities happening locally. QRA also took this opportunity to consult with human service providers and the wider community to identify what relationship/professional development opportunities they want and value. A number of QRA members willingly and enthusiastically volunteered their time throughout the day (see picture).

Professional Development and Training: QRA have run a successful professional development and training opportunity for human service providers, on group facilitation; for which they received a favourable response from the participants with 90% indicating they were highly satisfied with the workshop and 100% indicating they would be interested in attending future professional development/training opportunities.

Strategic Planning QRA have recently undergone a period of strategic planning and consolidation and have many more professional development and relationship educational opportunities planned from now until the end of June 04.

QRA resource Centre is coming together well and at present our 150+ resources have been catalogued and are currently being labeled and covered with the assistance of our wonderful volunteers. QRA are also currently consulting with other agencies, groups and organisations to identify particular resources they would like to see housed at the QRA resource centre (see picture).

ILLAWARRA CHILD & FAMILY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP, NSW

The three project workers from the Illawarra Child and Family Community Development partnership reflect on their progress to date and look at some of the themes emerging from their partnership. The Illawarra region, which includes the local government areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama, is located approximately one hours drive south of Sydney on the East Coast of New South Wales. This project consists of three project workers working in separate public and private housing estates with vulnerable families with varying levels of need. These estates are based in Bundaleer, Albion Park and Flinders.

There are three partners in this project. One partner is a large non-profit charity (Barnardos South Coast in Bundaleer), one is – Albion Park Neighbourhood Association - a small community-managed non-government organisation and the other – the Flinders Child and Family Centre - is local council based (Shellharbour City Council). An action research model is being used to look at the disparities of service delivery between the three project partners, and to develop a model that helps articulate ways of working with communities that have varying levels of strengths and pressures.

What has the project been doing since its last Bulletin report?

All three project workers have been building participation and trust within their communities and have been working with issues and needs identified by them. Residents are being supported to engage with their broader community in a variety of ways.

Bundaleer has been using a family strengths approach in addressing issues such as housing problems, financial issues, and child protection issues for people living on the estate. A focus has been on the active participation of adults and children in community development models and practice as well as a mix of direct service delivery, outreach services and information/referral.