

HUME

New health strategy launched

Alesha Capone

BID TO IMPROVE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AREAS

A PLAN to improve sexual and reproductive health across the north has been launched to address six priority areas including high teenage pregnancy rates, low Pap-screening numbers and the rising levels of transmissible diseases.

Women's Health in the North introduced "A Strategy for Going South in the North 2016-2021" at a Bun-

doora event, held last Tuesday.

The strategy was developed in partnership with the Northern Metropolitan Region Sexual and Reproductive Health Network, and other partners.

The regions covered include Hume, Banyule, Darebin, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra.

Women's Health promotion worker Hayley Pritchard said the six priority health areas in the strategy "disproportionately" affected the north, such as high rates of chronic hepatitis B.

In five of the northern municipalities, the birthrate in girls aged 15-19 was higher than the Melbourne average of 7.3 per 1000 young women.

In Hume, this was the highest, with a 10.3 birthrate per 1000 girls aged 15-17.

Hume women also recorded a Pap-testing rate of 53 per cent, lower than the state average of 60 per cent.

In addition, only 71 per cent of Hume girls aged 15 had received a human papillomavirus immunisation.

"Broad clinical and educational strategies are required to address these issues as the strategy details," Ms Pritchard said.

"We need local government, along with health and community service providers, to commit to collaboratively addressing sexual and reproductive health outcomes through comprehensive, best-practice programs

and services. A Strategy for Going South in the North provides a framework to support the development of best-practice programs and services."

The strategy detailed actions to help address the issues facing women in the north.

A report also said that councils, schools and educational institutions could help by distributing free condoms.

BROADMEADOWS



The Field Trip mentors Havana Ocal and Daniel Abela catch up for a game of Uno with participants Brianna, 12, and Tammy, 12.

Picture: JOSIE HAYDEN

Mentors give motivation and a helping hand

A GROUP of young leaders are volunteering as mentors for a Broadmeadows after-school initiative which aims to help children and teenagers discover their potential.

Dianella Health will be supporting The Field Trip, at Kenley Court Neighbourhood House, for the rest of the year.

From July 19, The Field Trip sessions will be held on Tuesday afternoons for young people aged between 10 to 16.

The Field Trip was designed to help youths make friends through a group project, discover their passions and delve into areas of interest.

The Field Trip is co-ordinated by trained leaders aged 18 to 24, who previously participated in the program themselves.

The Field Trip mentor Daniel Abela, 21, said he believed it was important to positively motivate youth.

"What I enjoy most about the program is seeing them

open up to us over a period of time, work towards specific goals, accomplish tasks and calls us their friends while giving us hugs," he said.

Fellow mentor Havana Ocal, 21, said she liked getting to know children and seeing them feeling free, happy and safe.

"Every child needs a role

model in their life. The Field Trip allows children to set goals and ambitions in life," she said.

The free The Field Trip program will be held at the Kenley Court Neighbourhood House, 18 Kenley Court, Broadmeadows from July 19 to September 13. Details: 0400 344 746.

HUME

Councillors put in the spotlight

THE code of conduct for Hume councillors has been strengthened as part of statewide efforts to increase the accountability of elected representatives.

At a special meeting in Broadmeadows last Tuesday, the council revoked its previous code of conduct - adopted in 2013 - and introduced the new one, as required by the State Government.

The new code of conduct states that all councillors must avoid conflicts between their public duties and personal interests, not give misleading statements and ensure that public resources were used "prudently".

Councillors who break the code will have to face internal resolution procedures and, if found guilty, could be asked to apologise in a matter decided by the council.

Their punishment could include being removed from any council representative positions for up to two months.

Hume mayor Helen Pat-sikatheodorou said the code also reinforced the importance of all councillors being allowed to speak their minds.

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HUME LEADER, Tuesday, July 12, 2016 **05**